£4.99 May 1997 ISSUE 50

PC ZONE

World first!
- PREMIER MANAGER 97
- TANKTICS
- OUTLAWS
- SUB CULTURE

FREE! Keyboard Overlay

50th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

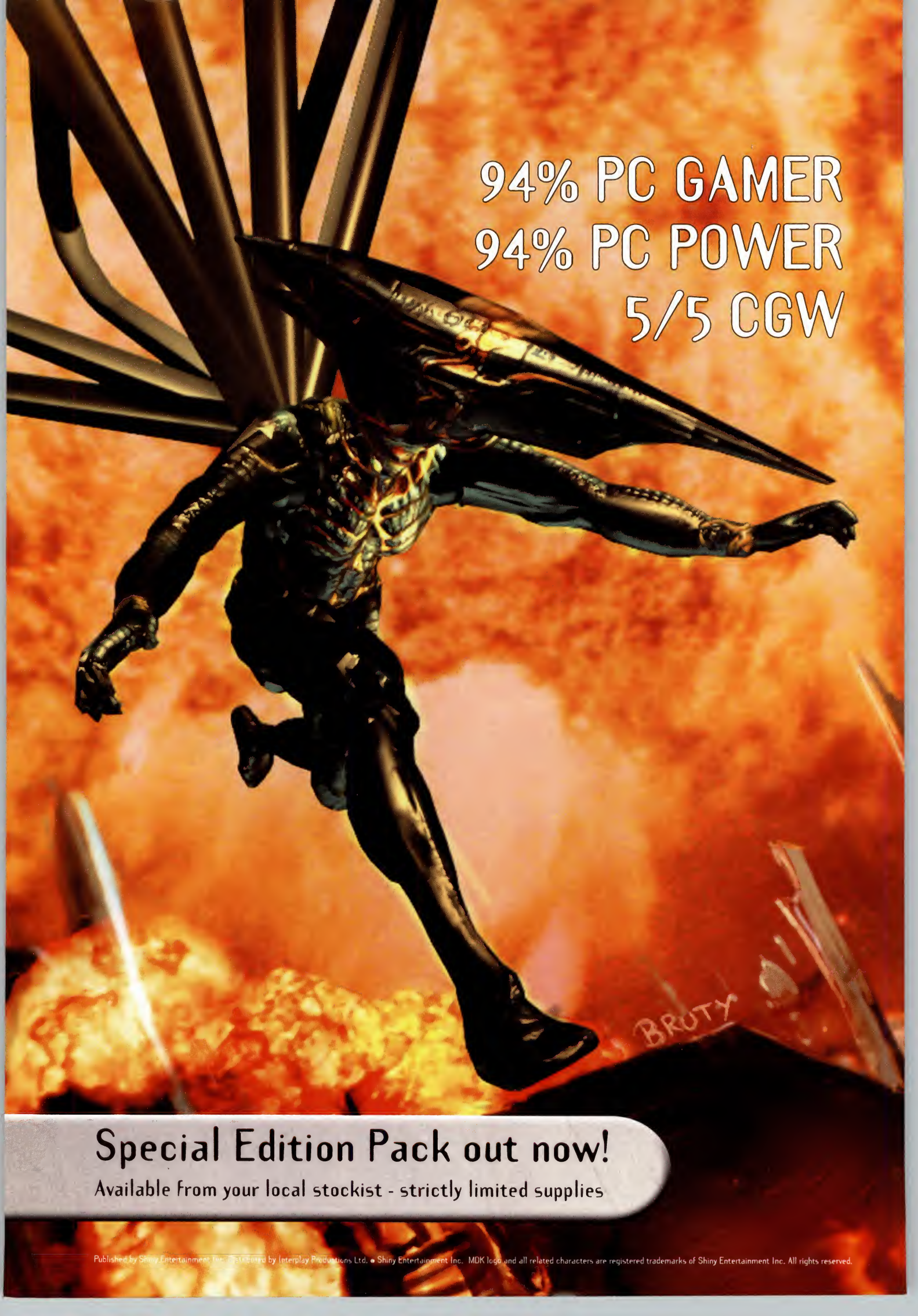
JEDI KNIGHT
DARK FORCES 2

Reviewed This Issue:
- CARMAGEDDON
- NEED FOR SPEED 2
- DARKLIGHT CONFLICT
- FORMULA 1
- KICK OFF 97
- CAVE WARS
- MDK

Exclusive! CARMAGEDDON THE GAME THEY TRIED TO BAN!

PHENOMENAL!

NEW GAME OFFER! See Page 120



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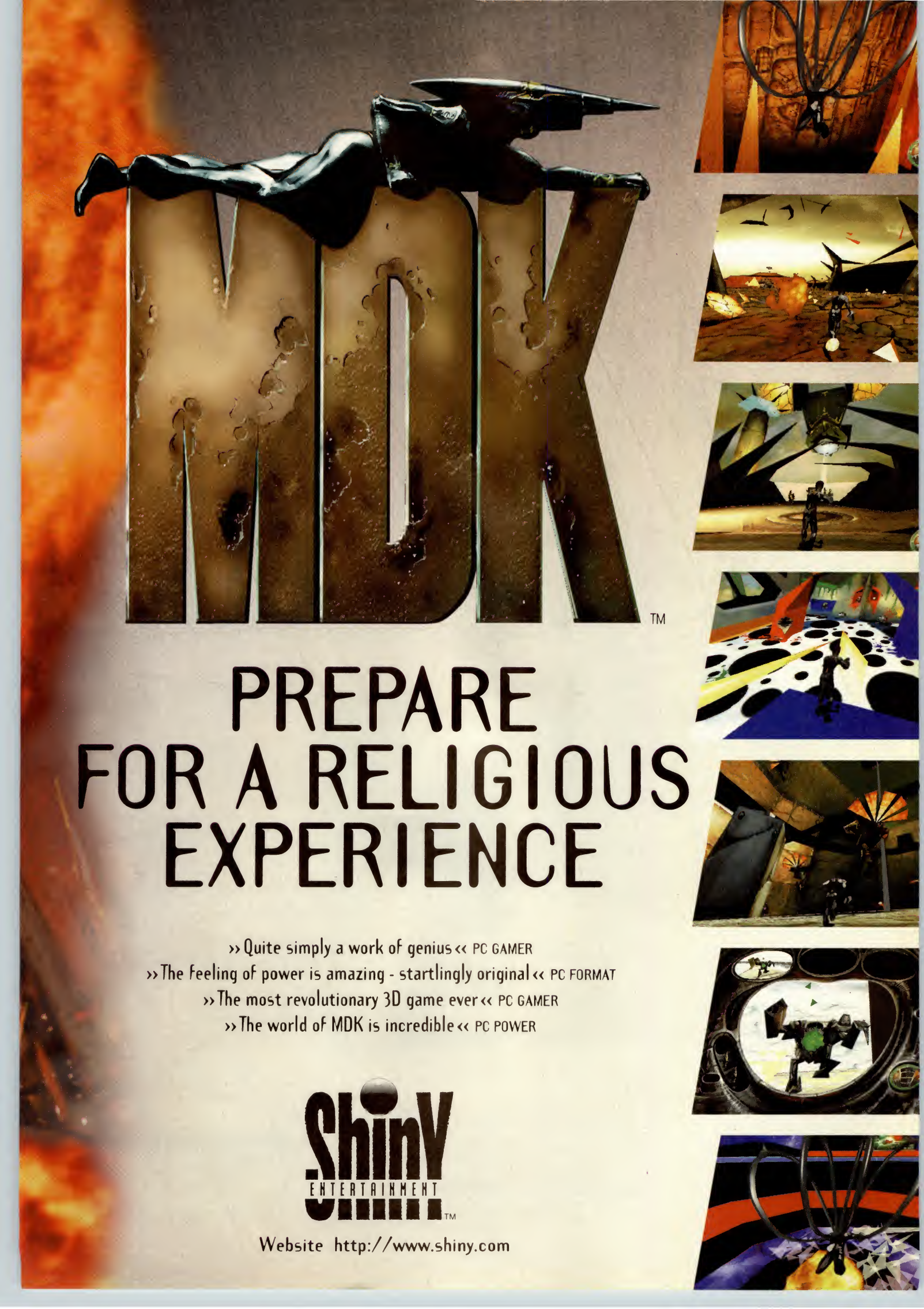
MDK
TM
PREPARE
FOR A RELIGIOUS
EXPERIENCE
»Quite simply a work of genius« PC GAMER
»The feeling of power is amazing - startlingly original« PC FORMAT
»The most revolutionary 3D game ever« PC GAMER
»The world of MDK is incredible« PC POWER
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The sequel to one of the most innovative driving games comes hurtling into the *PC Zone* office in a cloud of dust.

Cave Wars 99
Yet another *C&C* clone rears its head, but does it offer anything new to the genre?

Formula 1 102
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They used Ian Wright, Patrick Viera and David Seaman for the motion capturing, so it must be good, mustn't it?

Darklight Conflict 108
A graphically stunning space combat game that surprised us all – including Paul Presley.

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Trophy Bass 2 114
The first one was good. Is this one even better? Let Culky tell you all about it.

JEDI KNIGHT: Dark Forces 2

The new, improved films are finally here and we've got an EXCLUSIVE look at what promises to be the biggest *Star Wars* game ever. Check out our massive eight-page preview of *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* starting on page 40 and prepare to be amazed.

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PPA

ABC 49,655

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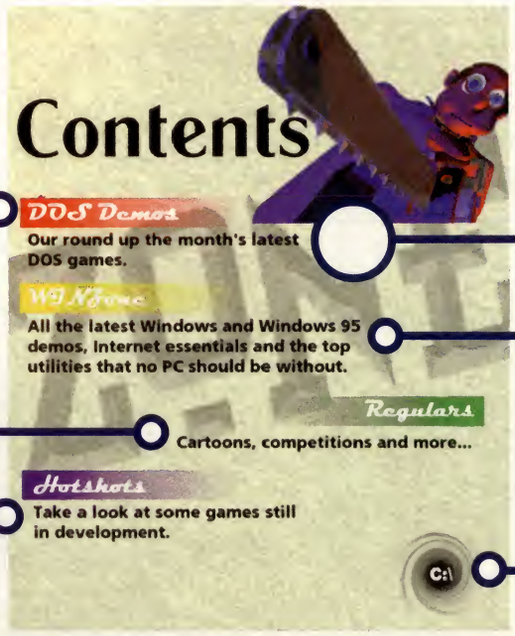
CD ZONE On the disc

This month's CD is packed with some excellent demos that should keep you busy right through the Spring holidays. To access the software on this month's CD from Windows 95, pop the CD in the drawer and double-click on the CD icon on your desktop. Simply double-click on the BROWSER.EXE file and this will launch the CD browser program which will enable you to select and install this month's demos.

If you're running your machine under DOS, insert the CD and change to your CD-ROM drive (the default command is usually <D:>). Type <PCZONE.EXE> to launch the browser.



Click here to access the DOS demos on this month's CD

Click here to explore the Internet stuff, cartoons and the Our Price chart

Click here to see how some of the hottest new games are shaping up

Click here to access the plethora of Windows demos on offer this month

Click here to go back to the C:\ prompt and quit the CD

Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250
Any week day between 11am and 6pm
(Please DO NOT phone the *PC Zone* office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the faul.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (50), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Post code:

.....

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Installation shortcuts

If for some reason the front end to the CD won't run properly you can still install each demo by bypassing the front end altogether.

Simply switch to the appropriate directory (as shown on the table below), type the install command (you can either type it in as one long line or press <ENTER> after each back slash) and then press <ENTER>.

For example if you wanted to run Interplay's *MDK* demo you'd type the following:

Type CD DOSDEMOS <ENTER>

Type CD MDK <ENTER>

Type MDKDEM95.EXE <ENTER>

The game should then install itself to your hard drive.

Manual installation commands

Demo	Directory/installation line
Theme Hospital	DOSDEMOS\HOSPITAL\DOSSETUP\SETUP.EXE
MDK	DOSDEMOS\MDK\MDKDEM95.EXE
Flying Corps	FLY\FLY.EXE
Sonic & Knuckles	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\SEGA\SONIC\SONIC3K.EXE
Mind Grind	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\MINDGRND\SETUP.EXE
Sega Rally	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\SEGA\RALLY\INSTALL\SEYTUP.EXEX
Theatre of Pain	PAIN.EXE
Virtual Pool 95	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\POOL\SETUP.EXE
Inner Space	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\SPACE\SETUP.EXE
Culky's Video	WINDEMOS\MISC\CULKY\BLOKEBRD\BLOKEBRD.EXE
Flight Action	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\ACTION\AXSFLITD.EXE
ZPC	WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\ZPZ\\ZPC_DEMO.EXE

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You'll need at least a Pentium 75 with 8Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM. Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95 and as a result, some of them may require 16Mb RAM to run satisfactorily.

Where appropriate, we've included the minimum specifications as a guide to each individual game demo.

THEME HOSPITAL *BULLFROG/EA (WIN 95/DOS)*

THIS EXCLUSIVE DEMO offers you a scaled-down version of the full product – you'll find that many of the on-screen icons are disabled – but it still provides a weighty challenge. Your objective is to cure a minimum of 20 patients within a single year. Were the game played in real-time, it would be a piece of piss – except, of course, that it isn't. In *Theme Hospital*, the days whiz by like a cheetah speeding downhill on a motorcycle, so you'll need to think fast in order to attain success.

The demo gives you step by step instructions while you're playing – but here are a few pointers to read before you get totally sunk to the nuts in it...

7 To build a room, choose the facility you require, hold down the left mouse button and drag out the blueprint to the size you want. Click on the 'Tick' icon and place the windows, doors and furniture.

CONTROLS:

Mouse/keyboard
Left mouse button: Activate icon/ select staff member
Right mouse button: Pick up member of staff
Specs: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, VGA/SVGA

6 Use this icon to get the staff requester screen up. The first member of staff you need is a receptionist – without her, the patients won't even bother showing up.

PSST! FANCY A FEW HINTS?

- Hire more than one receptionist if you like – two desks, and two people manning them will ensure that patients find their destination quickly and with the minimum of confusion (unless they're delirious with fever or something).
- The layout of the rooms can affect the performance of the occupants. If your GP's offices are small, dark and cramped, they're more likely to become miserable and inefficient.
- Place benches outside each room you build. If patients have to stand around while they're waiting, they'll get annoyed and tired.
- If you fancy raising a little extra revenue, place and turn up a few radiators, then put a drinks machine within easy reach. Cue plenty of hot, dehydrated patients – with money to burn. It'll make them need the toilet more frequently, mind.
- Keep your thinking cap on when positioning the door in a room's blueprint. Nothing's more irritating than having to go back and re-edit a room because you can't build anything else nearby without blocking the entrance.

1 This I'il clock will pop up at the start of the game. Keep a beady eye on it, since it lets you know how much time you've got left to build your hospital before the general public start beating a path to your door.

2 Bollocks to Pirelli – at least as far as this demo is concerned,anyway – *this* is the most important and influential calendar around. Once the year's up, the chips are down, and your arse is on the line. Hokey-cokey? Karaoke.

5 Nuzzling up against this quizzical-looking icon turns your cursor into a question-marky thing which, when clicked upon any given room, will allow you to re-edit it. You can adjust the size, shape and layout of the room in a thrice. So if one of your GP's offices is too small, or the toilets are in the way of the operating theatre, make use of this friendly critter.

3 Click here to build a new room in your hospital. There's a limited number of them in the demo – the full game features *arseloads* more. Be sure to read the description for each one, since it lets you know whether the facility you're building has any special requirements (eg a particular member of staff permanently manning it).

4 Slamming your mouse button with bestial fervour into the backside of this pliant icon brings up the 'corridor items' menu. Remember that everything from the drinks machines to the pot plants serves a particular purpose – so make sure that you read the descriptions for each item v-e-r-y carefully.

PIRACY ON THE HI-TECH
HARDWAR
the future is greedy
TRUE 3D FLIGHT ACTION [MASS COMBAT] INTENSE STRATEGY AND [TACTICAL TRADING]
[COMING SOON....]
SOFTWAR™
Brain Aided™ Design and Beats
i love my DR
WARP
CATCH US ON THE WEB http://www.gremlin.co.uk
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tested gameplay features
Gremlin INTERACTIVE

HD ZONE

TO INSTALL THIS MONTH'S HD DEMOS FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS below and the games will install themselves onto your hard drive. Both games run under Windows (*Inner Space* is Windows 95 only) and you'll need to click on the the .EXE files after switching to your A: drive with the floppy inserted. To install *Virtual Pool '95* double-click on the VPOOL95 icon file. To install *Inner Space* double-click on the SPACE icon and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the installation routine (the default install file for both games is your TEMP file, but this can be altered).

Both these games are also included on the CD and can be installed via the browser as normal.

Virtual Pool '95 (Interplay)

This classic pool sim may be a bit dated, but it's yet to be bettered and now it's available for Windows 95 users. It's completely mouse-driven and very easy to use.

NB This program requires DirectX3 to run and is Windows 95 only. Access the README.TXT file for further info.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

NB Hit ESCAPE or F10 to access the main menu/keyboard commands.

Inner Space (Shareware)

This innovative *Asteroids*-style game actually uses the files on your hard drive to build its levels so every PC you install it on will result in new levels. The basic idea is simple: fly about the screen, picking up the icons and avoiding the lumps of rock that make up your files. Use your radar located in centre/bottom of your screen to navigate your way around the level. Access the HELP file for further info via the in-game menu.

CONTROLS:

Joystick/keyboard

↑←↓→	Movement
Spacebar	Fire
RETURN	Missile
ESC	Abort mission/options

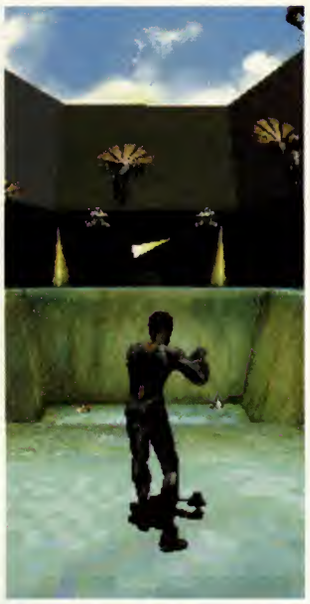
MDK INTERPLAY (WIN 95/DOS)

THERE'S BEEN INTENSE DEBATE over the exact 'meaning' of the initials *MDK* for a while now – 'Malevolent Defecation King' being our personal favourite – but as far as our cover CD is concerned it stands for 'Massive Demo – Knice!' It may require a fairly butch PC to run at optimum speed, but by God it's lovely. Especially the 'sniper mode' bits.

The level opens with you (ie Kurt) plummeting towards an alien base. During this freefall interlude, you should aim to collect as many power-ups as possible (they're dangling from little ribbon chutes, dum-dum). Beware, however, of the incoming missiles and the gigantic green laser beam, which should be avoided like airborne Ebola.

Once you're on the ground the fun really begins. Try out the sniper mode (by pressing the spacebar) as soon as you can. Keep an eye out for any 'radiation' symbols you see clamped onto doors – to open them you'll need to find a small nuclear warhead (no, really). Power-ups of this nature drop down periodically during the game.

Before long you'll find yourself in a nifty 'practice room' which allows you to become familiar with all of Kurt's abilities. Just follow the on-screen prompts if you get confused. If you like this demo, bear in mind that it's but a tiny sliver, a miniature fraction of the overall product, which has an incredible number of surprise levels and other weird stuff in it, okay? Good.



BIG HOT TIPS

- Use the mouse when you're in sniper mode. It's more accurate.
- Another sniper's tip: once you've zoomed in on something and got a good aim on it, zoom out before firing. That way you'll be able to see what's going on around you.

CONTROLS:

Normal mode:

I J K L	Movement
ALT	Jump! (hold for ribbon chute)
	Toggle sniper mode
SHIFT	Run, run like the wind
CAPS LOCK	Toggle run mode on/off
CONTROL	Machine gun everybody in the goddamn face
X	Hold for 'sidestep' mode (dead handy when you're being shot at)
A	Look up
Z	Look down

Sniper mode:

↑←↓→	Aim
CTRL	Fire
[ ]	Select weapon
A	Zoom in
Z	Zoom out

Specs: P90, 16Mb RAM, SVGA

SONIC AND KNUCKLES SEGA (WIN 95 ONLY)

IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT 'KNUCKLES' IS SUPPOSED TO represent, he's an *enchilada*, okay? With pink hair, like one of those pierced indie chicks who hang around Camden Market every Sunday. Anyway, this is a little demonstration slice of Sega's upcoming platform game pie, starring everyone's favourite nippy hedgehog and his dual-tailed, equally nippy foxy chum, Miles (his surname's Prower – *geddit?*).

The basic rules are so simple, even an American could follow them without raising a hand and saying "excuse me, but just what the *hell's* the *deal* he-aahh?" Collect as many rings as you possibly can and get to the end of each level. When you're spinning, you can land on enemies (and certain other objects) and bash and smash and destroy them. If you get hit, you'll drop all your rings – try to pick as many back up as you can, because if you hit something and you *haven't* got any rings, it's curtains for Sonic. Now g'wan, git!

CONTROLS:

Normal mode:

↑←↓→	Movement
ENTER	Jump

To perform a turbo-spinny thing, hold the 'down' key and hit 'jump' lots of times until you get bored. Then let go and watch Sonic vanish into the distance quicker than a politician's morals during a Whore Convention.

Specs: P75, 16Mb RAM, VGA, Windows 95 only

SEGA RALLY *SEGA (WIN 95 ONLY)*

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT, WHAT I *rally, rally* want – I *rally rally rally* wanna zig-a-zag car. Welcome to the high-octane world of *Sega Rally Championship*, a nightmarish journey into the mind of a serial killer (*Surely 'faultless piece of slam-bang arcade racing'? – Ed*). If the controls seem 'slippery' at first, don't despair – it's because you're driving over slick runny mud and damp gravel, you dunderhead.

This demo restricts you to one track, one car, one-player mode, and practice levels only – but it's still a laugh. By the way, the full version has a nifty two-player split-screen version which is utterly magic and stuff. Raa. Etc.

CONTROLS:

←→	You got three guesses, wiseguy
0	Accelerate
1	Brake
4	Change camera
RETURN	Start game
F1	Help
F3	Pause
F4	Toggle windowed/ full-screen mode

Specs: P75, 16Mb RAM, VGA/SVGA, Win 95 only

MIND GRIND *MICROFORUM (WIN 95)*

YOU'VE GROUND YOUR TEETH. YOU'VE GROUND YOUR COFFEE. YOU'VE even ground your hips (against a sailor's bottom). Now it's time to stop grinding all that shit, and start grinding your mind instead. Ladies and Gentlemen, say a big 'Woo-hah!' for MicroForum's *Mind Grind*, the trivia game that turns your PC into something not entirely dissimilar to one of those Pub Quiz machine thingamajigs.

You (and a mate, if you're playing in two-player mode) have to answer a series of bamboozling questions, across a wide range of categories from 'Horror' to 'Sound Effects'. The more questions you answer correctly, the more squares on the screen you light up. Make it all the way to Earth and you're the winner. Don't play while drunk, or you won't be able to concentrate properly, and you might wet your pants and vomit everywhere and that sort of thing.

CONTROLS:

Mouse

Specs: 486DX/66, 8Mb RAM, SVGA, Win 95 only

PIRACY ON THE HI-TECH
Harbwar
the future is greedy
[FIGHT] TRADE OR DIE [PILOT YOURSELF TO FREEDOM IN THE TRUE 3D CITY OF MISPLACED OPTIMISM]
[COMING SOON....]
Brain Aided™ Design and Beats
i love my DR
WARP
CATCH US ON THE WEB http://www.gremlin.co.uk
© 1997 Gremlin Interactive Ltd. Gremlin Interactive Ltd, Carver House, 2-4 Carver Street, Sheffield, S1 4FS, England. TEL: +44 (0) 114 279 9020 FAX: +44 (0) 114 273 8601
Software™
tested gameplay features
Gremlin INTERACTIVE

THEATRE OF PAIN *MIRAGE (DOS)*

IT COULD REFER TO ALMOST ANY production starring Keith Barron, but instead what we're dealing with here is a distinctly Anime-influenced beat 'em up for one or two players. It's got more or less everything a decent fighting game needs: an incomprehensible background story, lots of fighters with stupid monikers and, of course, more 'special moves' than a Boston callgirl-cum-contortionist (perhaps I'd better re-phrase that...). Anyway, it's waiting for you to come along and play with it, so don't go letting it down, eh?

CONTROLS:

Player 1

Q	Up
Z	Down down, deeper
A	Left
S	Right
E	Punch like a girl
T	Punch like Vanessa Feltz
D	Kick
F	Kick like Peter Sissons
G	Kick like Michael Buerk

Specs: P90, 16Mb RAM, SoundBlaster

CD ZONE EXTRA *CULKY BECOMES BLOKEBIRD*

CULKY'S BACK, BUT HE'S CHANGED HIS WAYS FOR GOOD. HE'S DECIDED TO put away his chin-pistons and go in for a little community care instead. Trouble is, no one wants his help. Can't think why?

Imagine *Doom*, re-made in a bold comic book style. Drawn by someone who's only got black and red ink at their disposal. Influenced by stark, iconic Russian symbolism. Or something. And you've got *ZPC*. Oh, just start playing it will you?

Flight Action (Axisism Software)

A graphically simple but very playable WWII flight sim that gives you the opportunity to shoot down a few Hun and pop a few loops.

Hot Shots

This month's electronic picture gallery features shots of the forthcoming 3D accelerator-only version of the Psygnosis smash PlayStation hit *WipeOut 2097*, Adventuresoft's *Feeble Files* and the innovative new platformer known as *Odd World* from GT Interactive.

Privateer 2: The Darkening Patch (Electronic Arts)

Load this patch into your *Privateer* directory and this extra bit of code will sort out the bugs and problems that plagued the initial release.

Internet Goodies & Essentials

As usual we've crammed as many little extra shareware utilities onto this month's disc in an effort to make it as useful as possible.

CONTROLS:

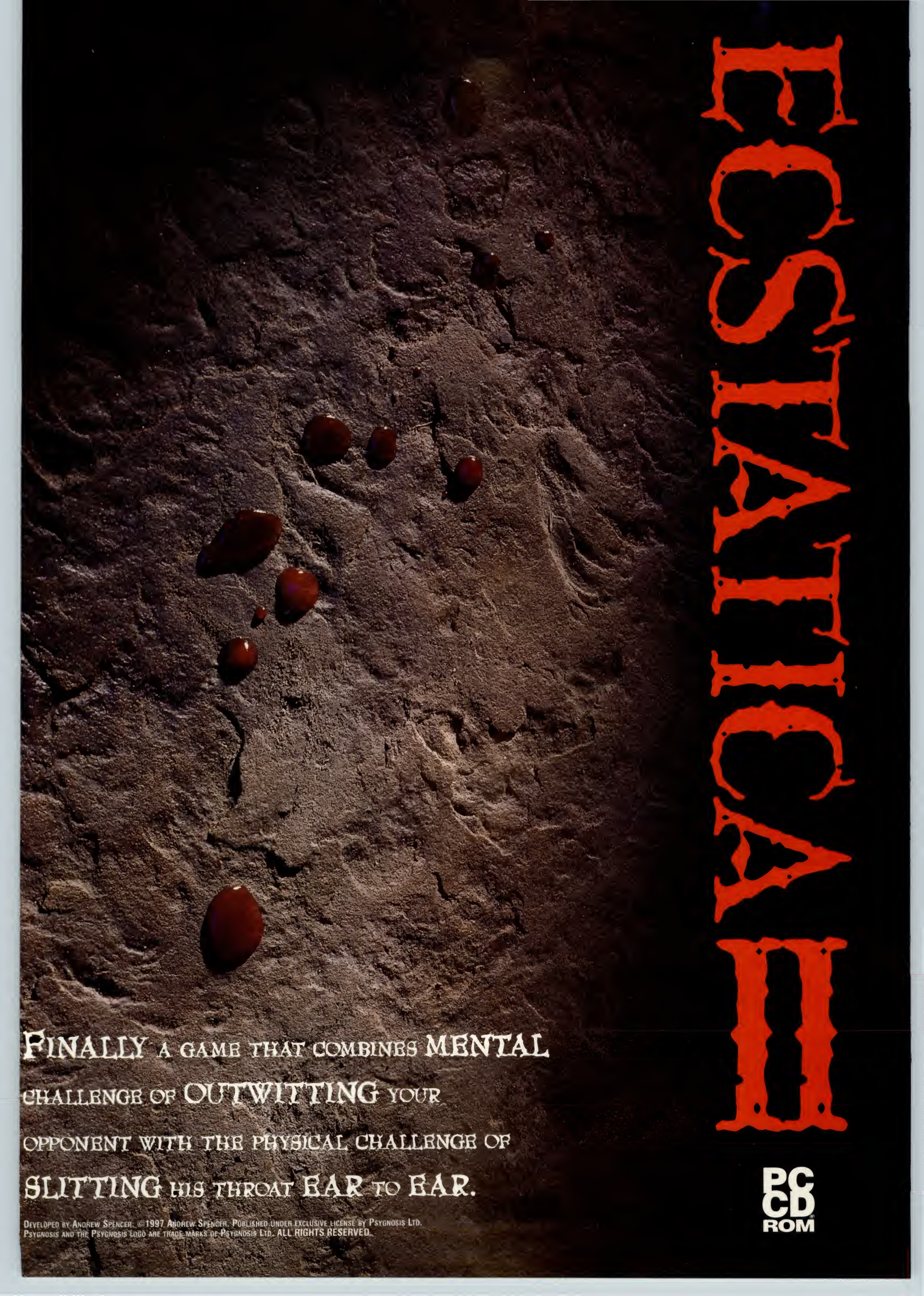
Keyboard/mouse/joystick

(For a full list of controls access the 'Program Information' screen via the in-game menu.)

Specs: P75, 8Mb RAM, VGA

CONTROLS:

↑←↓→	G'wan! Move!
CTRL	Shoot your load
1-8	Select weapon
Z	Sidestep left
X	Sidestep right
SHIFT	Quicker, you slacker


ECSTATICA II
FINALLY A GAME THAT COMBINES MENTAL
CHALLENGE OF OUTWITTING YOUR
OPPONENT WITH THE PHYSICAL CHALLENGE OF
SLITTING HIS THROAT EAR TO EAR.
PC CD ROM
DEVELOPED BY ANDREW SPENCER. ©1997 ANDREW SPENCER. PUBLISHED UNDER EXCLUSIVE LICENSE BY PSYGNOSIS LTD.
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BULLETIN

What's new! What it looks like! When it's out!

Roberta Williams Compendium

DATAPAD

Roberta and Ken Williams first started programming adventure games way back in 1979, when their gift to each other for

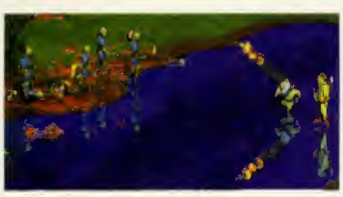
Hit and Myth

Better known for their best-selling multi-player Mac game *Marathon*, US developer Bungie have announced what looks like being the hottest real-time action game of the year.

Described as "the first example of a fully multimetric real-time tactical game", *Myth*, it could be said, is something of an enigma. It's a game of strategic battle that takes place in a richly detailed fantasy world, and a strategy wargame without the added boredom, or the hexagonal tilesets. Instead, *Myth*'s developers, Bungie, have gone for an all-out attack on the senses with ultra-realism, stunning visuals and an extremely high gore content, in the hope that it'll keep things lively.

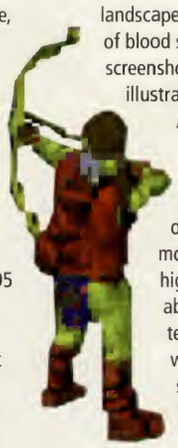
The game is being developed for Windows 95 only and uses a host of new 3D routines that, Bungie hope, will make it completely intuitive to play. With gameplay that focuses on tactics, rather than resource management, *Myth* eliminates all that waiting around while you build up your forces. All the elements a player needs to complete a level will be immediately available or can be seized from the opposition during play (if you have the nerve and the skill, that is).

Myth features real-time camera movement over a 3D battlefield, giving the player complete freedom to view their forces from any angle – orbiting their heads, zooming in for a close-up on a melee, panning past a long column or flying over the landscape in any direction.



Led by a 'malevolent deity made flesh', a pantheon of fallen lords lay waste to the living and it's the player's lot to meet them in bloody combat.

The programmers have also incorporated a real physics model into the game. Explosions and impacts will ripple the ground and knock objects into the air, missiles will arc realistically and bounce off units' bodies; rocks and heads will roll down hills, and fountains of blood will stain the landscape. The carpet of blood seen in these screenshots certainly illustrates this well.



And it doesn't end there. This feature-packed game also shows off real terrain modelling: units on high ground will be able to fire further, terrain features will provide cover, slope gradient will affect passage of troops, and water will splash when disturbed. It also features 'real' weather, including 3D particle effects such as snow, ash and rain, which will put out fires; 'real' lighting means that all units, structures, terrain features, projectiles and even clouds will cast dynamic shadows on the ground and reflections in the undulating water; plus there's shitloads more.

The game is being written using an easily-customisable scripting language based on Java *(A popular Internet scripting language – Ed.)*, which will allow users to write their own scripts to reprogram monsters, alter game constants and even change the rules of multi-player Internet games.

Bungie say that *Myth* will be released in 1997, which is no help, and we're also informed that, although they have a UK distributor for the Mac version of *Myth*, a distributor for the PC version has yet to be decided.

Take a look at **http:\\www.bungie.com** if you're still in need of convincing.

The little big man returns

Fans of the quirky cult hit *Little Big Adventure* will be pleased to hear of a planned sequel. It's tentatively titled *Twinsen's Odyssey* and is set for a high-profile release early in the summer. Again, French uberdeveloper Adeline are doing the honours with Frederick Raynal at the helm.

The *LBA 2* story picks up from the original game, with lead character Twinsen celebrating the defeat of the evil Dr FunFrock. This new adventure revolves around the invasion of the planet Twinsun by a race of aliens who've begun kidnapping all the wizards and children in an attempt to control the world. Twinsen can't let this happen, so he sets out to infiltrate the alien homeworld and lead a revolution.

The cartoony style and off-beat humour of the original will again prevail, but the graphics have had a major overhaul and *Twinsen's Odyssey* will feature a new 3D graphics engine with only internal locations retaining the isometric style of the first game.

Adeline claim that *Twinsen's Odyssey* will be 50 per cent larger than the original game and will also boast a new and better save feature, better controls and vastly improved graphics. We can hardly wait. Look out for a full preview next month.

Twinsen returns in a second *LBA* outing. Just look at those graphics. Spooge!

Christmas was an Apple II computer. Since then, Roberta has designed over 14 full adventure games, all of which are being collected and released as an Anthology pack in March.

Spread over four CDs, *The Roberta Williams Anthology* contains PC emulated versions of her early Apple games (*Mystery House, Wizard And The Princess, Mission: Asteroid, Time Zone, The Dark Crystal*), plus all the Sierra

favourites including *King's Quest I* to *VII, Laura Bow I* and *II* and the first *Phantasmagoria.*

Retailing at under £35, *The Roberta Williams Anthology* should stir the loins of all gaming historians out there.

Have a nice slay

Can Raven bring *Gauntlet* into the '90s with their new overhead, 3D action fantasy game *Mage Slayer*?

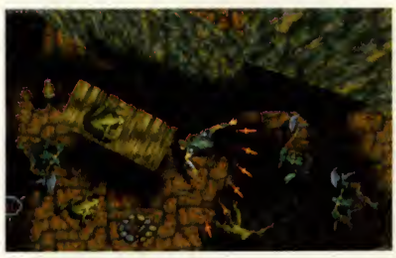
Magic users are often seen as the cowards of the fighting fantasy adventuring world. This is mainly because most fighters are caught in the thick of the action, but the average mage is content to shuffle about in the background, muttering incomprehensible incantations and being of little use to muscle-bound party allies. Well, now the time has come for these oft-bearded Gandalf types to experience a taste of real bloodshed as they are quite literally forced to take arms in the new *D&D*-style action RPG *Mage Slayer.*

Although *Mage Slayer* uses a modified version of the *Quake* engine, the game's developers have opted for an overhead view (rather than the usual first-person affair), which seems to have been an inspired decision on their part 'cos the game's already looking pretty wonderful.

All 30 levels of *Mage Slayer* have been embellished with numerous puzzles and structurally-intricate landscapes. A hitherto unseen amount of visual effects are promised in the final version as well. A lot of work is being put into the way characters increase in level and power, and all four of the controllable classes will have numerous special weapons that reveal themselves as experience levels gradually increase.

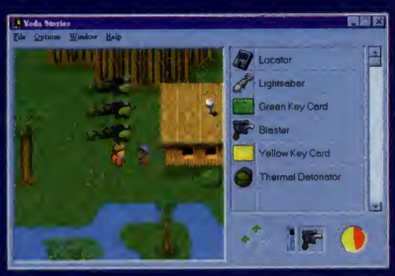
At the moment *Mage Slayer* is due for a June release and we'll be taking a closer look at the game in the next issue of *PC Zone.*

Http://www.gtinteractive.com has more information for potential wizard killers.



(Far left) One hundred and eighty! (Left) Mind the gap. (Above) Fighting off the Kirby vacuum cleaner salesmen.

Do. Or do not. There is no try

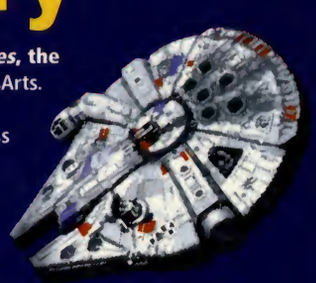


The heroic struggle of good and evil is to collide with the Force in *Yoda Stories*, the next challenging instalment in the easy-to-play *Desktop Adventures* series from LucasArts.

Out late spring, *Yoda Stories*, like its predecessor, *Indiana Jones And His Desktop Adventures*, features unique world generator technology capable of creating countless varied, short game scenarios, each designed to be completed in about an hour. The world builder engine has been significantly improved this time around and we are promised more in the way of puzzles, characters, locations, weapons and sounds.

Each game begins as Luke lands his X-Wing in the thick swamplands of the mysterious planet Dagobah. As Luke, the player's initial task is to find Yoda who will send him on a quest and provide a valuable item to assist him on his travels. Luke's trek takes him to one of several exotic worlds or Imperial strongholds where he must then solve a sequence of puzzles to defeat one of his many different enemies. Obi-Wan also appears from time to time, dishing out 'Force powers' as he sees fit. The powers mean the player can retrieve various items from a distance, move rocks, or immobilise weak-minded opponents.

As well as the usual save game feature, *Yoda Stories* also allows players to gain Force Factor points that are tabulated according to how quickly a game was finished, how many puzzles were solved in order to reach the end, and how difficult it was to defeat Luke's adversaries. Now how cool does all that sound? For further details check the LucasArts web site at **http://www.lucasarts.com.**



***Yoda Stories'* excellently dinky graphics are full of character and are sure to be a hit with *Star Wars* fans. Check out the Imperial Walker (right) and the downed Millennium Falcon (above).**

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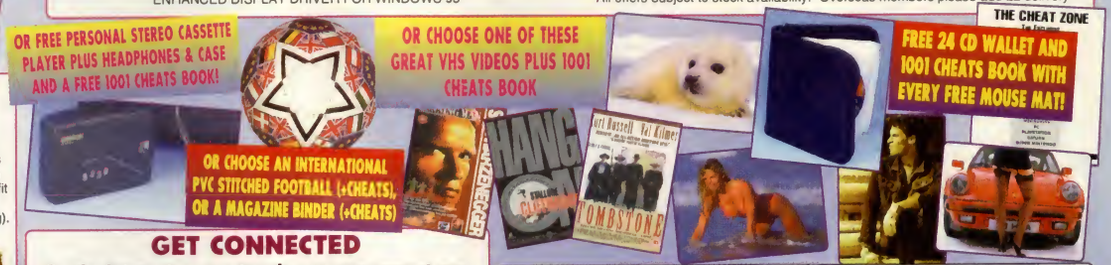

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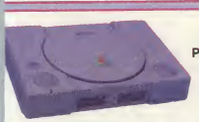

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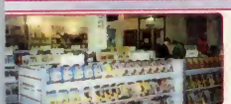

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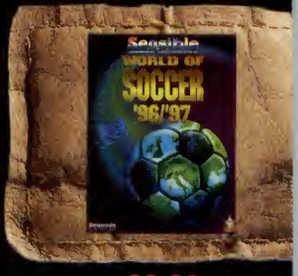

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DATAPAD

Huge investment in PowerVR

NEC and VideoLogic recently unveiled their PowerVR-Ready Games Enhancement Programme, a co-ordinated effort to aid developers in building and selling PC-based games for PowerVR 3D graphics accelerators, at a cost of $25 million ($16 million to developers and $9 million in advertising).

At last it seems that at least one company is prepared to make a bid to create an industry standard for accelerated 3D cards. Now all we need is the software...

Reduced to rubble

The game (above) and the Designers Republic logo (below).

What's this? Yet another bloody tank game? Yep. S'right. This one, though, is called *Mass Destruction* and it'll be coming our way towards the end of April, courtesy of those well-dressed people down at BMG Interactive.

Mass Destruction will allow the player to wreak havoc on 24 target-rich battlefields in a mission to decimate anything and everything that lies between them and the hostages they're meant to be rescuing. As you would expect, there'll be a huge arsenal of weaponry with which to vent all that pent-up aggression (including proximity mines, flame throwers, guided missiles, blah, blah, blah) and an increasingly hostile opposing force available to take the brunt of it.

Mass Destruction integrates 2D and 3D graphics using something called 'Sprolygon' technology (an unforgivably poncey name for an engine that mixes sprites and polygons), which we've seen a zillion times before in games such as *Duke 3D* and *MDK*. There's also a (gasp!) game logo designed by those revered art-wanksters at Designer's Republic, which, undoubtedly, will sell the game by the bucket-load.

The machine that goes Biing

Supposedly named after that sophisticated piece of hospital heart-monitoring equipment made famous in Monty Python's *The Meaning Of Life*, *Biing (I thought it was 'Piing'? – Ed.)* could be described as *Theme Hospital* with tits in it. But we wouldn't stoop to such a depth.

The game begins when the player buys or rents a plot on which to build their medical empire. After that *Biing* is described as a 'non-stop roller coaster of medical madness' and, from what we've seen of it so far, it certainly seems to be doing things that other medical simulations aren't. Like filling every screen with huge breasted, scantily-clad nurses. Which is... er, fine by us really.

Biing is being developed by German development house Magic Bytes (who, incidentally, are working on *Axelerator* for 21st Century) and is scheduled for completion in March.

As we go to press, a UK distributor has still to be confirmed, so Magic Bytes had better get their skates on and find one!

Be your own Baldric

Always surprising us with new and original ideas, Electronic Arts recently turned our attention to an interesting new game called *Beasts & Bumpkins*, which we would describe as a sort of medieval village simulator. Programmed by a small team in Langley, Berks (who are just down the road from EA's offices, apparently), *Beasts & Bumpkins* is a real-time resource management game with a difference, and even features real-time combat – à la *C&C*. Construct villages, cathedrals, farms – even herd cattle and roll around in shit if you like – it all sounds like good old fun whichever way you look at it.

***Beasts & Bumpkins* will have 30 pre-set missions (at varying difficulty levels) to act out, and tons of multi-player options so that your mates can get involved too. And the features don't stop there either – there's exploding cow disease to contend with for starters, not to mention the wandering beasts that attack your village and run off with your women! Honest! More stuff is being added to the game as you read this. Who knows what we could expect? Maybe a witch hunt? It's anyone's guess – anything could happen between now and May when *Beasts & Bumpkins* is finally released.**

DATAPAD

Burning Ambition

Burning Ambition is to be the first full game release from the slickly-marketed Pepper's Ghost stable and is currently looking for a UK publisher.

Formed in 1995, Pepper's Ghost are an entrepreneurial graphics technology house that have been working on a new character animation technique called 3D Avatars. What this does is basically wrap photo-realistic texture

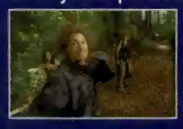
The truth is out there somewhere

Having recently signed an exclusive publishing deal with Electronic Arts, AnyRiver Entertainment have at last unveiled the first two games from their top secret in-house development programme.

Out first, *A Fork In The Tale* is being described as "a full-motion video adventure that doesn't take itself too seriously" (which is wise in light of the current 'Interactive Movie' backlash). More interestingly, AnyRiver's second game nominates itself as the first ever "flying saucer simulator" and looks like being a title to watch in '97.

AnyRiver Entertainment, based in San Mateo California, was founded by Stewart Bonn (ex-EA), Jim Bloom (22 years of film-making experience under his belt, not to mention senior production credits on *The Empire Strikes Back* et al), Andy Sells (ex-Sony) and Charles Clanton (wayward designer-type fellow) in 1995.

When we approached them to talk more about *Flying Saucer* all we got was the rather puzzling: "We can neither confirm nor deny existence of AnyRiver products that may or may not expose conspiracies within the US government." It seems we'll have to wait before this truth is known. AnyRiver have a Website at: **http:\\www.anyriver.com**, if you want to read more about them.



A Fork In The Tale: A 'forking' good story, or a load of old FMV tosh?

ZONE PC ZONE SPECIAL REPORT!

Activision

At a recent press conference in Maidenhead, Activision bigwigs unveiled an impressive programme of expansion for 1997.

Only six years ago Activision found themselves steadily slipping into a murky world of financial ruin, eventually going into receivership in 1991. Since then, a new management team has miraculously pulled them right out of the doldrums and back into the big time.

(Top) Activision UK MD Bob Dewar. (Above) *Dark Reign*'s Ron Millar at the controls.

Speaking at an Activision media conference recently, UK Managing Director Bob Dewar spoke of the company's search for new talent and of a working philosophy that has driven them from down-and-outs to surprise front-runners in the battle for market supremacy.

So what's causing all the fuss?

Activision's new *Quake* add-on, developed by Hipnotic, is currently wooing players everywhere (see review last issue), and there's a second *Quake* pack in the offing from Rogue at some point in the very near future. But by far and away the most significant announcement from Activision at the conference was the signing of iD/Raven's *Hexen 2*. Attendees were not only treated to an early look at Raven's much anticipated RPG cum shoot 'em up, but they were even allowed to play it for a short period.

We learnt that *Hexen 2* is to feature four player characters (Paladin, Fighter, Necromancer and Cleric), each with nine weapons, and more than 12 completely new monsters. There'll also be more environment-based puzzles, which include interactive scenery and the facility to crouch in order to explore narrow tunnel systems. Atmospherics will play as big a part in *Hexen 2* as they did in *Quake* – not only will players be treated to the elements, but they'll also be able to interact with fully-animated villagers that populate a medieval town in one of the levels.

Activision plan to release *Hexen 2* in June, so look out for a huge preview next month and the review pretty soon after that.

(Left) *Dark Reign*, we think, could give *Red Alert* a run for its money. (Right) *Quake Pack 2* multi-grenades!

More big robots in *Heavy Gear*.

And there's more...

Already heavily into the *Zork* series of adventures, Activision's next step in the evolution of the Great Underground Empire will be *Zork: The Grand Inquisitor* – a story which re-visits many of the locations that made *Zork* so popular initially.

Using an upgraded version of the Z-Vision engine, *Zork: The Grand Inquisitor* will apparently be more accessible to less experienced players (we saw the new improved navigation system) and will also contain more of the famous *Zork* humour that seemed to be missing from the previous title in the series. *ZGI* is due to ship at the end of autumn.

The *MechWarrior* series has also been an extremely successful franchise for Activision, and although they're abandoning the actual licence, their experience in the 'real-time mech combat' sub-genre is already proving useful for *Heavy Gear* – their latest robot-on-robot actioneer, signed in an exclusive ten-year deal from Target Games. *Heavy Gear*, we're told, is the fastest-growing over-the-table RPG campaign setting ever (growing by 600% in 1996), and Activision's in-house development team have a new graphics engine and all sorts of other cool stuff to chuck in before it's completed for Christmas.

Early conceptual artwork from *Zork: The Grand Inquisitor*.

And, would you believe, even more...

Eric Parker, the designer responsible for Activision's excellent *A-10 Cuba*, was on hand at the conference to demo a playable version of his revolutionary new combat sim *Dogfight* (working title).

Although *Dogfight* will feature support for a number of 3D accelerator cards, the game will also utilise software emulation of hardware acceleration to

maps onto polygon figures in an attempt to make them look completely human. It's still early days for *Burning Ambition*, and first impressions are favourable, but at the moment the game is bare of the planned neo-Central American storyline and the 3D Avatars have yet to be dropped in. Apparently a number of TV companies are interested in using the 3D Avatars technology for use in their programmes. Blimey, it must be good!

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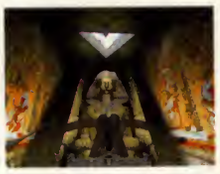

Sumptuous surroundings in *Hexen 2*. Many of the textures seen in the game have been used only once, adding to the varied nature of the architechture.

maintain an incredibly high standard of visuals on anything upwards of a P133. Features such as 'perspective correction' ensure that all the texture-mapping remains clear and free from break-up. This was demonstrated to good effect on the cockpit detail in *Dogfight* – rather than use a 2D bitmap for the cockpit, as is usual, Eric Parker and his team have developed an alternative solution that utilises only polygons and textures to achieve a more realistic effect; the only down-side is a slightly lower polygon count than usual. Regardless, it looked amazing, and we can't wait to see the end result in the autumn.

Also shown in-depth for the first time were *NetStorm* (see On-line News) and *Dark Reign* – two real-time strategy games hitting the market from alternative angles.

Dark Reign, from what we've seen so far, should be cause for concern for Westwood and Blizzard. The game is brilliantly presented, and is packed with more features than you could possibly imagine. In fact, we did ask Ron Millar (ex-Blizzard, now working on *Dark Reign*) if there was anything they hadn't thought to include in their game. "You guys tell me – you should know more about the competition than us!'" came the reply. Well… uh, it looks like they haven't missed a trick. Aren't we lucky?

For more information of the games mentioned here, point your web browser at **http://www.activision.com**.

Stop press: Activision sign first full Hipnotic game

Hipnotic Interactive, the people behind the stunning *Quake: Scourge Of Armagon* pack, have signed their first full game to Activision and hope to have it completed and out on the streets by early 1998. Hipnotic will use iD's legendary *Quake* engine to create a first-person, level-based, 3D action title – details of which are being kept a closely guarded secret. Look out for more details as they emerge.

Win! Armagonna git ya!

Quake: Scourge Of Armagon expansion packs

Hipnotic Interactive's awesome new Quake expansion pack will have hit the streets by the time you read this, and in celebration of this fact *PC Zone* has ten *Scourge Of Armagon* CDs to give away to you trigger-happy lot.

Experience the dark, evil secrets of 15 new levels, including the incredible Lost Mine, and the Vore-infested Black Cathedral. Experience new monsters such as the nail-spitting scorpion-esque Centroid, or the thieving, cackling Gremlins. In fact, experience *Quake* as it should have been the first time round.

To win one, tell us the answer to this question:

Q. From the pictures below, which creature do you think is not featured in *Scourge Of Armagon*...

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B

C

Answers on a postcard to: 'Armagon Wrestling', PC Zone Competition CPCZ75E Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK

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DATAPAD

Rally Championship add-on

Would-be rally drivers addicted to the chart-topping motor sim *Network Q RAC Rally Championship* will be pleased to hear that the game's publisher, Europress, are set to release a new add-on pack containing ten new courses at the end of March. *The X Miles*, as it is to be called, will retail at £14.99 and will

Get the candles out

Available in June from Gametek is *Dark Colony*, a promising addition to the ever-increasing ranks of the real-time strategy genre. Although this fixed-view, isometric game wins no prizes for originality, it's already looking pretty impressive in the visuals department.

Dark Colony **is set in an extra-terrestrial environment inhabited by a race of fierce 'Grays' who ambush your units from giant cobwebs in the landscape. Sounding more like an acid flashback than a game, *Dark Colony* also dazzles the player with a real-time lighting effect that casts realistic shadows on the ground and creates explosions that light up the sky. A large selection of pre-determined missions make up the main part of the game (although how many has yet to be confirmed), and there will also be a user-friendly Mission Builder included so that you can make it up as you go along. Now, isn't that smashing?**

Gametek's *Dark Colony* – no marks for originality but some lurverly graphics.

Good Arrows

Macclesfield-based Europress Software have announced a new slant on the PC flight genre with an officially licensed simulator of the crack RAF display team the *Red Arrows*.

Living the whole *Red Arrows* experience, the player will be expected to turn cunning stunts and toss their Hawk all over the shop in an attempt to join the elite display team, ultimately reaching the heady heights of 'Red One' – the team leader.

Red Arrows will feature four different modes of play. Training mode will teach all the necessary skills a solo Hawk pilot needs. With experience under their belt, players will then be required to apply for a place on the *Red Arrows* team. Not everyone will be successful, though – there are nine other applicants up against you and only three places on the team, which is a superbly original way of adding that extra incentive to do well in the game. The others include a Single Display mode which will let the player practice routines with the team; a World Tour which is to be the full 'campaign' doodah, and Arcade mode which dispenses with the complexities of the flight simulation side of things, so that your average Joey is at least allowed to have a bit of fun.

Red Arrows is currently scheduled for an October release. For more information try **http://www.europress.co.uk**.

(Above) Early art from *Red Arrows*.
(Right) Formation flying comes to the PC!

New games rental system unveiled

An interesting new development in the accessibility of PC games has emerged from a company that goes by the name of *Gamester*.

PC games can be rented from Gamester as per video rental, but without having to rush back to the shop to return them. In fact, *Gamester*'s games are actually non-returnable if the person renting them so wishes, allowing them the chance to build up a library of games which can be reactivated whenever required. Imagine having a shelf full of games and only having to pay £1.99?

The *Gamester* system uses a highly powerful encryption system, built into the games you rent, and a slot-in piece of hardware called SMEC™, which controls access time to them. So, when the rental time expires, like a library book that you've had for too long and haven't finished reading, you can call for another access code and 'get your book re-stamped' as it were – and if you rent a game you don't like, you can return it and rent out something else instead.

Gamester membership is free. The only cost to members is for the SMEC™ device, which retails at £19.99 – and this is recoupable in the form of 'virtual vouchers' which refunds £20 against the value of the user's initial rentals. There'll be more than 250 *Gamester*-equipped shops throughout the UK by the end of March, and this number is expected to rise to 500 after only six months. Look out for one opening near you soon.

For further details call Freefone 0800 424263.

feature added extras such as jumps and tunnels. With tons of hairpin bends, tricky gradients and tight times, these new courses are said to be far harder to drive than those in the original game and will no doubt prove a real test for even the bravest *Rally* expert.

The X Miles will automatically check for an existing version of *Rally Championship* and will then update it to the new version.

Everything in the original game remains unchanged, and the new courses will come complete with their own course maps.

Other extra features include furry dice and tiger skin seat covers. Not.

Hero 'til the end of the night

Win!

Wages Of War and Heroes of Might & Magic II

It's not often that the world's pointy-beards get a chance to throw their arms in the air, shaking their strangely-adorned jackets in jubilation, but the release of 3DO's *Heroes Of Might & Magic II* is one such occasion. Having notched up a very respectable 87% back in issue 47 (with our own Paul Presley describing it as: "...jolly good" – but then he always was a bit odd), 3DO have decided to celebrate by giving away ten copies of the only game in the world to feature 'proper' operatic music. Not only that but the ten lucky recipients will also receive a copy of *Wages Of War*, another top game that received a very worthy 89% in issue 46.

To get your hands on the games, simply read the following question, assign the thought-processing pixies in your head to the task of working out the answer and then apply an ink-giving device to some mashed pulp and send the result to the address below. Get those entries in before 20 May though, or we'll sit around and laugh at your tardy nature.

Who was the wizard in King Arthur's court?

A. Marilyn **B. Merlin** **C. Merthyr Tydfil**

Answers on a postcard to:
"I can cast spells, me"
PC Zone Competition CPCZ75C, Customer Interface
Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK.

Rules: *All entries to be received by 20 May 1997. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final.*

Hexen for Windows 95

A new souped-up version of the original *Hexen* arrived in the office this week. Still in its testing stages, *Hexen 95* is being nipped and tucked by a development team called Wild Tangent. The game is essentially the same as the original, only this time the programmers have taken advantage of what Windows 95 has to offer and have incorporated all kinds of interesting new features.

Simultaneous Mac/PC multi-player games are now possible thanks to new DirectPlay technology. What that means to us is that, here in the office, the editorial team (PC) can now take on the design team (Macs) and we can all get no work done, simultaneously.

On a more serious note, *Hexen* will now run in hi-res (640x480 tops), as we found out to our amazement here. But, just as we began to get the hang of things, a man from GT came and took our preview version away. Now he tells us we can't have it back until it comes out in May. The rotter.

Splendid hi-res graphics in the new and improved *Hexen* for Windows 95.

Betrayed at birth

Following the massive success of *Betrayal At Krondor*, Sierra are to release a new sequel called *Betrayal In Antara*. This time Dynamix, the *Antara* developers, are hoping to broaden its appeal to a wider audience by incorporating 'autopilots' which will control many of the game's detailed features within features.

Also from Sierra comes *Birthright*, another RPG that is essentially a role-playing game which combines the traditional stat-spotting aspects of over-the-table play with real-time strategic combat elements. Instead of limiting the player to the control of a single character, *Birthright* will allow them to command large armies, magical sources, powerful guild holdings and temple priesthoods. The strangest thing about the game, though, is that it will use a first-person (*Doom*) style of view and we've yet to see a playable version here to see how this works.

(Top left) Choose your own sad little alter ego in *Birthright*. (Left) A gorgeous-looking map from *Betrayal In Antara* and another screen showing all kinds of other mad stuff going on. AD&D fans never had it so good, innit?!

DATAPRO

Strawberries and creaming it

We've seen more of Gremlin Interactive's *Actua Tennis* since our brief announcement in the news last month. The third instalment in the award-winning *Actua Sports* series, *Actua Tennis* is already being described by Gremlin as "the (strawberries and) cream of sports sims", which made us laugh. In the game there'll be stuff like motion capture (which Gremlin have already proved they're good at), and a celebrity commentator who they've yet to announce. The game is due out in June, which, oddly enough, is around the same time as Wimbledon. Now isn't that a coincidence?

THE OFFICIAL 1997 PC ZONE UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP

PC Zone is gathering together the cream of PC gamesplaying talent in a search to crown the nation's best multi-player player with the title _Official PC Zone UK Games Champion_. The event, which is being held over the summer months (at a number of key Internet cafés dotted throughout our fair isle), will see registered combatants fighting it out over six different categories of game in a bid to reach our Krypton Factor of a final on 24 August. For full details, read the rest of the words on this page. This is going to be the largest gathering of the best gamesplayers ever - make sure you're part of it!

THE GAMES CATEGORIES

SHOOT 'EM UP:	*Quake: The Scourge Of Armagon*
FLIGHT SIM:	*EF2000*
SPORT:	*Actua Soccer Club Edition*
BOARD GAME:	*Risk*
RACING:	*Network Q RAC Rally Championship*
COMBAT STRATEGY:	*C&C: Red Alert*

Scoring will take the form of a league table, so you won't necessarily have to come top of every category to win (but if you do, we're sure it won't do you any harm).

THE VENUES

THE SOUTH EAST (AND FINAL)
Shoot 'n Surf
13 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1BA
Web: Http://www.shootnsurf.co.uk
e-mail: pczone@shootnsurf.co.uk
Tel: 0171 419 1183

THE MIDLANDS
Cyberpub
5 Victoria Centre
21 Lower Parlament Street
Nottingham NG1 3DB
e-mail: ntm00001@cyberpub.adr.co.uk
Tel: 0115 947 5394

THE NORTH WEST
Cyberia
12 Oxford Street
Manchester M1 5AN
Web: http://www.easynet.co.uk/cybman/
e-mail: pczone@easynet.co.uk
Tel: 0161 950 2233

IRELAND
The Internet Exchange
Drury Hall, Lower Stephen Street
Dublin D2
Web: http://www.intex.ie/cafe.html
e-mail: pczone@intex.ie.co.uk
Tel: 353-1-4758788

THE SOUTH WEST
Internet Express
1b Exeter Central Station
Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3SB
Web: http://www.inexpress.co.uk
e-mail: pczone@mail.inexpress.co.uk
Tel: 01392 201544

THE NORTH EAST
Punter's Cybercafe
111 Arundal Street
Sheffield S1 2NT
Web: http://www.punters.co.uk
e-mail: pczone@punters.co.uk
Tel: 0114 276 2668

SCOTLAND
Reality-X
54 Broughton Street
Edinburgh EH1 3SA
Web: http://www.reality-x.co.uk
e-mail: pczone@reality-x.co.uk
Tel: 0131 478 7099

WALES
The Cardiff Cybercafe Ltd
9 Duke Street
Cardiff CF1 2AY
Web: http://www.cardiffcybercafe.co.uk
e-mail: pczone@cardiffcybercafe.co.uk
Tel: 01222 235757

PC ZONE UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP REGISTRATION FORM:

Please fill in this registration form and send it to your chosen venue. Alternatively, if you feel you're in dire need of a bit of exercise, why not trot on down and take your form to them in person? It can be done.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Tel: ..... Fax (if applicable): .....

E-mail (if applicable): .....

Alias: ..... Age: ..... Sex: .....

Occupation: ..... Favourite game: .....

Computer at home (circle one): None 486- Pentium+

Do you have Internet access at home (circle one): Yes No

Chosen venue: .....

Please tick here if you do not want to receive further information about other special offers from your chosen venue. ☐

Photocopies not accepted. If you don't want to cut up your copy of PC Zone, *take it with you when registering at your chosen venue. Contact chosen venue for current charge rates. Contact only your chosen venue for information. No trainers (joke).*

THE DETAILS

The final will be on **Sunday 24 August**. It will take place at Shoot 'n Surf, London WC1, and it will be the day where some mad gaming nut is crowned *Official PC Zone UK Games Champion*, wins a brand new, state of the art piece of kit worth somewhere in the region of two grand, and gets to have a member of the opposite sex (same if they prefer) rub baby oil into their private parts for a champion-definable amount of time. Okay, maybe not that last bit (although we'll see what we can do).

After registration, a schedule will be dispatched to you which will show the dates on which *The Official UK Games Championship* challenges are to be held. Keep this schedule and turn up at your chosen venue on the dates shown (otherwise you'll be ridiculed mercilessly by your peer group).

There'll be plenty of prizes to win throughout the competition and, of course, the entire *PC Zone* team will be at the final to act like children and generally taunt you while you're at a crucial point in your game.

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DATAPAD

Stick it to me

Ooh, joysticks – how we love them. Big ones, thick ones, small ones, fat ones. How we like to hold them in our hands. Mmm, joysticks...

And Logic 3 have a bundle of lovely new sticks this month. They are, in ascending order of value, *PC Tracer* (entry-level joystick, £10.99), *PC Invader* (entry-level flightstick, £19.99), *PC Charger* (hi-spec fighting joystick, £24.99), *PC Dominator* (fully-featured flightstick, £29.99) and *PC Terminator* (top of the range flightstick, £34.99). And ooh... here's a picture of them all in a nice little 'arrangement'. Call Logic 3 on 0181-902 2211 for more joystick thrills.

Pandemonium on PC

Crystal Dynamics' fabulous PlayStation platform game *Pandemonium* is to make its transition to PC later in the year, thanks to the combined efforts of BMG Interactive and development house Wild Tangent.

For those of our readers who have never had the opportunity to play the console version, *Pandemonium* is basically a 2D platform game wrapped in a luscious 3D coating, blessed with finely-honed gameplay and more surprises than anyone could possibly have hoped for.

Pandemonium begins with the game's two main characters in a bit of spell-casting palaver, having summoned a huge demon that promptly begins chewing up their homeland. They are told their only hope is to seek and locate the fabled 'wishing engine', to reverse the spell and right their chewed-up world. So off they go with a spring in their step, through gigantic castles, brightly-coloured landscapes and dangerous sawmills.

Having recently played a work-in-progress of the PC conversion, we can report that it's looking as good as the PlayStation version – and that's really no bad thing. PC *Pandemonium* will be released in June, and we'll be running a full review in the very near future.

Pandemonium: **amazing graphics ported from PlayStation to PC.**

You read it here first

Last-minute mumbling as we go to press... Mindscape seem to be climbing out of a relatively quiet period with a number of new games scheduled for the summer.

Su-27 v1.5 (Windows 95 upgrade with greatly advanced graphics and 150 new missions), *Supersonic Racers* (an enjoyable multi-player overhead racing game with *Wacky Races*-style graphics), *International Basketball* (working title), *Imperialism* (resource management set in the 19th Century) and *Buccaneer* (a pirate adventure) will all hopefully be out by the end of August. Look out for full details and maybe a few screenshots in next month's Bulletin.

A Health Service for everyone

Did we forget to mention that Bullfrog's *Theme Hospital*, as well as having a wealth of beautifully drawn hi-res graphics, also boasts a low-res option so that lower-end users can join in the fun? No, we can't have done.

"We didn't want to preclude anyone from having the chance to play *Theme Hospital*," Project Leader Mark Webley told us. "Which is why we have included a low-res option. We want as many people as possible to play *Theme Hospital* as it is the best Bullfrog game to date."

Take note 486 owners.

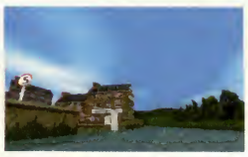
Outboard river racing

The driving genre is about to welcome a soggy new addition to its heaving stable in the form of *Power Boat*, a spray-gasmicly fast racing game from Interplay, due out in June.

With nine ever-changing tracks spread across the globe (from Moscow to Mount Fuji) and 'music that is evocative of your surrounds' (let's guess: mandolins in Russia and jazz in New York?), *Power Boat* should be more than capable of recreating the adrenaline rush of those famous chase scenes in *Live And Let Die*.

The race can be viewed from absolutely any angle and the backgrounds are fully animated too – the player will even have to dodge container cranes that continue working, and evade attempts from chasing roadside vehicles that attempt to hamper their progress. And not forgetting that essential real physics model (which controls your buoyancy in the water), which generates an impressive amount of spray as you motor through the water.

More dripping wet info at **http://www.interplay.com** if you've got access to the Internet.



Messing about on the water in Interplay's new racing game *Power Boat*.

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DATAPRO

Stop that bloody racket!

Mirage are further supporting the release of their real-time action strategy game *Bedlam* with a new add-on mission pack called *Absolute Bedlam*.

Absolute Bedlam will contain 27 new levels, including a new, improved training zone and a surprise, extra final level with some superhuman baddies to contend with.

Added to that will be ten specifically-designed deathmatch levels, plus a range of new enemies and new features such as an extra difficulty level and a new soundtrack. *Absolute Bedlam* is sch eduled for a summer release.

THE MAN WHO KNOWS

Greetings mortals. Please allow me to introduce myself, I'm a man of wealth and taste. I have many guises, but as far as you're concerned I am simply *The Man Who Knows...* I hear everything that happens in this twisted little industry that we work in, an industry that keeps me in the manner to which I have become accustomed, enabling me to comfortably maintain my sinister champagne lifestyle. Wherever gossip is spoken, wherever a megabucks deal is being thrashed out, I am to be found lurking in the shadows; waiting, watching, ready to report my findings exclusively to you, the loyal *PC Zone* reader.

So... to begin this month's excursion into the dank world of tittle-tattle, it is with a raised eyebrow that I note the demise of Bullfrog's long-awaited 3D underwater adventure, Creation. Following months of sub-aquatic code crunching, the 'powers that be' at EA have pulled the plug on the game, sinking it without a trace. In a candid chat with a Bullfrog spokesperson, I probed for the official line. Come, oh ye of aliterative nomenclature, do tell, why exactly was it dropped?

"Basically, there wasn't an awful lot of confidence in the product," they said, "particularly from EA in the States. This was based primarily on their research in the US which found that underwater games never sell that well, so for that reason they felt that it would be best not to continue with the project. At the same time Guy Simmonds, the project leader, had this idea that he wanted to start his own company up and do his own development. We do feel a bit disappointed here at Bullfrog."

And what about these persistent rumours about Peter Molyneux looking at a move to EIDOS?

"As far as I'm concerned that is just a rumour, and I know that Peter is cross about the whole thing. At the moment he's finishing his work on Dungeon Keeper. I know where the EIDOS rumour came from and I'm pretty disgusted by it."

In more canned games mayhem, it seems that Activision have lost all faith in the proposed Pitfall 3, crushing the nascent project underfoot before the ejaculate of creativity had even fertilised the ovum of production. No official reason has yet been given, although of course it could simply be that it was cancelled due to lack of interest. In the heady world of software development, it seems that no game is completely safe from the downwardly pointing thumb.

Reclining on my chaise longue, disturbing news reaches my boudoir concerning a Soviet raid by representatives of Microsoft, apparently an American company of some repute. It seems that recruiters from the aforementioned pan-global conglomerate smuggled themselves into deepest Russia and 'persuaded' two of the programmers of Su-27 Flanker to join the dark side. Andrew Formichev and Sergey Bezruchin have since been 'relocated' to Seattle, coffee capital of North America and spiritual home of grunge music, where they have been set to work on a new air combat simulation, code-named Bitva, which the well-travelled among you will recognise as being Russian for 'dogfight'. Rumours that the newly Westernised duo were spotted stumbling around Seattle, playing air guitars and yelling "Where is crazee Nirvana grudge band?" have as yet proved unfounded.

Recruitment would appear to be the name of the game (not literally, it would never sell), with the news that Squaresoft are currently seeking programmers for a Windows 95 version of Fighting Fantasy VII. This long running role-playing malarkey has been available to Super Nintendo owners for years, and finally the PC posse look set to find out just what all the fuss is about.

It's almost time for my medication, but the trusty news pigeon has just delivered this unsavoury snippet of information: A SimCopter programmer has been sacked by Maxis for secretly including footage of men in bathing suits kissing and making "inappropriate motions" – some 50,000 copies of the game being affected. If you're one of the (un)lucky owners, the scenes can be viewed by typing <ctrl/ait/x> to access the cheat mode, followed by <Warp me to career: 29> then <Been there, done that> to see the show. And on that bombshell...

MMX-tastic pop pickers

The first wave of MMX-only titles are starting to filter through onto an unsuspecting PC audience, the first of which is a new first-person blaster from GT Interactive.

The second chapter in the story of the First Lunar War of 2069, which began with Fenris Wolf's *Rebel Moon*, *Rebel Moon Rising* continues the saga of the Lunar Defence Forces of the revolutionary Lunar Free State, who have wrestled control of most of the Moon's doomed colonies from the Shocktroopers of a UN-dominated Earth. Thanks to its orbital space platform, Earth still controls the high ground, while new special forces are being trained in low gravity combat to retake the Moon and put an end to the revolution. In gameplay terms this plot will no doubt translate as: 'If it moves, try and shoot it in the head.' Well, it's never been a problem in the past and it didn't seem to do *Quake* much harm in the sales department.

Rebel Moon Rising features advanced coloured lighting, allowing for dynamic bursts of light when lasers shoot down hallways, enemies fly by and objects explode – in an array of gloriously coloured lighting, of course. All these wonderful effects are obviously down to that guy that works at Intel in the pink boiler suit – you know, the bloke off the TV ads who listens to disco tunes and dances the night away while he's making the chips – weirdo!

Rebel Moon Rising is available in a sizeable shareware chunk from: **http://www.gtinteractive.com**. The full version is due out at the end of April.

***Rebel Moon Rising*: if it moves, accelerate it! Graphical effects galore in this *Doom*-style blaster.**

Lose your mind

PC Zone has ten copies of *Total Insanity* to give away to our quite insane readership – judging by the letters we get in, at least. Each pack, worth £45, contains *Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity* (94% in *PC Zone*), *Network Q RAC Rally Championship* (94% also) and *PGA European Tour* (which, would you believe it, again scored 94%) and is available from Europress Software right at this very moment.

So if you fancy winning a copy, all you have to do is answer the simple question below and send it to us.

Q. Which of the following games did NOT receive 94% in *PC Zone*?
A. *Privateer 2: The Darkening* **B.** *Phantasmagoria* **C.** *TIE Fighter*

Answers on a postcard to: 'Wibble'
PC Zone Competition CPCZ75D, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions
Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK
Rules: *All entries to be received by 20 May 1997. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final.*

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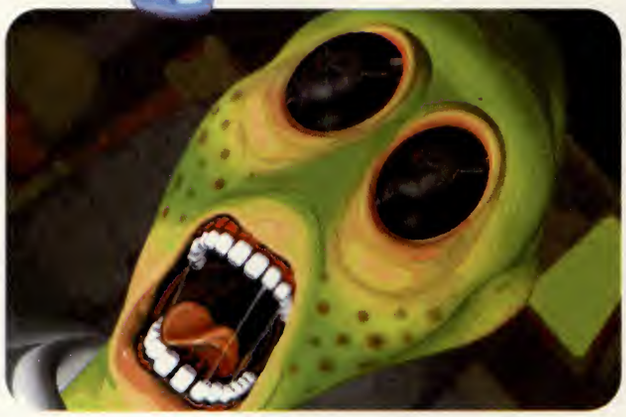
HOT Shots

Hot Shots goes up-market and is thus deemed worthy of an increase in size. Ha har! Laugh as we lay bare the *Feeble Files*! Scream at the sight of *Abe's Oddysee*! Tremble at the size of those *WipeOut 2097* shots!

Feeble Files (Adventuresoft)

It'll be interesting to see how American audiences react to Adventuresoft's *Feeble Files*. Not because of the curiously-styled nature of the beautiful graphics, or that the puzzles require slightly more brainpower than deciding which shaped peg goes in which shaped hole – more that the game seems quintessentially English in its sense of humour. Imagine insane English voices coming from these characters and you'll be part the way there. Look out for a full preview in the next issue.



Abe's Oddysee (GT Interactive)

Freshly laid by those creative chaps at Odd World Inhabitants (scary name...) come these new *Abe's Oddysee* shots. All the graphics in the game have been rendered in 3D Studio at an extremely high resolution, to 'future proof' them as it were. So expect to see this game on the Nintendo[128] Superscript at some point in the near future.

WipeOut 2097 (Psygnosis)

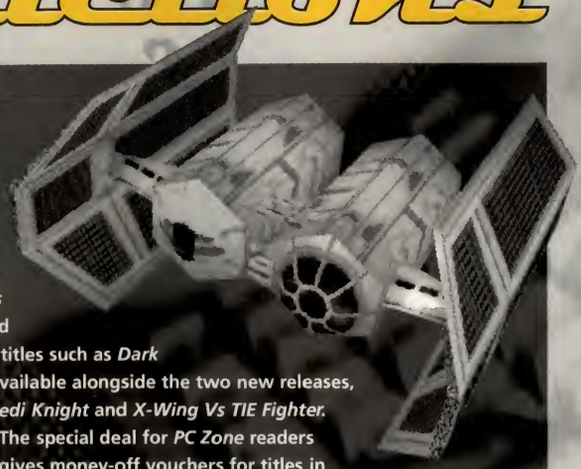
Influenced by the current underground club culture, *WipeOut 2097's* visual style mixes state of the art logo design with incredibly fast polygon graphics. This, combined with the stunning techno soundtrack (featuring The Chemical Brothers and Fluke among many others), is just one reason why the game has already become one of the most popular titles of the year. *WipeOut 2097* should hopefully be reviewable in time for our next issue, so we'll see then if it's set to repeat that success on the PC.

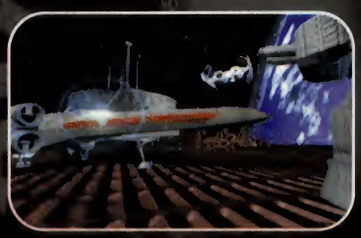
PC ZONE our price

CHART Predictions

Welcome to *PC Zone*'s version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature the titles we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

THIS MONTH, WE BRING you another great offer from Our Price, in the form a *Star Wars* promotion, running instore from 21 April for two weeks. Following on from the success of the excellent Kixx promotion, *Star Wars* can be found in the same space instore and features a choice of seven games. Current titles such as *Dark Forces* and *TIE Fighters Collectors CD* are available alongside the two new releases, *Jedi Knight* and *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter.*





The special deal for *PC Zone* readers gives money-off vouchers for titles in the promotion. The cover-mounted booklet on this month's issue contains Our Price vouchers giving up to £5 off selected *Star Wars* titles. The booklet's also a good read if you're seeking some inside information on the making of *Star Wars* and the games.

And as if that's not enough, this month also sees the long-awaited *MDK* in the Number One Chart position – but if this is already in your collection then watch out for *Theme Hospital*, a follow-up to the *Theme Park* game.

To take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, put pen to paper and answer the question below and send it in to: *PC Zone* Our Price Competition CPCZ75A, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 OBQ, UK.

OUR PRICE QUESTION: Who developed *MDK*?

Rules and restrictions: All entries must be received by Friday 25 April 1997. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR MORE NEWS FROM OUR PRICE NEXT MONTH!

DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.

1	**MDK** *(Interplay)* *£29.99*	
2	**THEME HOSPITAL** *(Bullfrog)* *£29.99*	
3	**TERMINATOR: SKYNET** *(Virgin)* *£14.99*	
4	**COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT** *(Virgin)* *£29.99*	
5	**CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2** *(EIDOS Interactive)* *£19.99*	
6	**TOMB RAIDER** *(EIDOS Interactive)* *£29.99*	
7	**MONKEY ISLAND 1 & 2** *(Virgin)* *£14.99*	
8	**SCREAMER 2** *(Virgin)* *£22.99*	
9	**ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 2** *(Sierra)* *£29.99*	
10	**FIFA 97** *(Electronic Arts)* *£29.99*	

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EIDOS INTERACTIVE

WIN WIN WIN

An unspeakably fab Pentium computer with ALL the trimmings

Those lovely people at Gremlin have decided to celebrate the undisputed splendidness of their excellent *Realms Of The Haunting* 3D adventure by giving away a Pentium computer fitted with a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, 16Mb of RAM, a SoundBlaster compatible sound card and speakers, as well as a copy of *Realms Of The Haunting* to play on it. We also have ten copies of the game to give away as runner-up prizes.

Realms Of The Haunting, as some of you will already know, is an atmospheric 3D adventure with glorious graphics (check out the screenshots), fiendish puzzles, and loads of highly detailed monsties to annihilate. We at *Zone* liked it so much we awarded it a score of 92, which elevated the game to the heady heights of *PC Zone* Classic status. All you have to do to stand a chance of winning this super computer and assorted goodies is answer the three questions below, send your completed competition entry to the address below and then pray that we pull your name out of the bag when we get round to choosing the winner.

QUESTIONS: Please tick boxes for correct answers.

1. Gremlin's 3D adventure *Realms Of The Haunting* is called
- **a)** Realms Of The Hunting ☐
- **b)** Realms Of The Haunting ☐
- **c)** Realms Of The Taunting ☐

2. *Realms Of The Haunting* is
a) Scary ☐ **b)** Hairy ☐ **c)** Lairy ☐

3. The 3D game environment in *Realms Of The Haunting* is
a) 2D ☐ **b)** 3D ☐ **c)** 36DD ☐

Name:

Job Title:

Company Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime phone number:

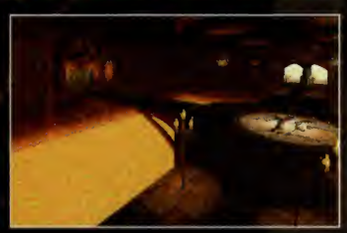
☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.

☐ Tick if under 18 years of age.

Please tick one only: Are you a current subscriber? Are you a regular reader? Are you an irregular reader?

Terms and conditions: All usual restrictions apply, for a copy of the rules please write to PC Zone at the usual address. All entries must be received by 25 April 1997.
Send this coupon to: PC Zone/Gremlin competition (CPCZ75B), Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 OBQ, UK.

* Please note that the computer shown may not be the model given to the competition winner.



Oi!

In which Charlie Brooker bends the ear of David Perry, boss man type at Shiny Productions, the maverick development team behind the 'defiantly original' *MDK*. Here's hoping he'll straighten it out when he's finished.

...Perry! What's

FEELING SICK? NO? WELL, YOU COULD try comparing your life with the life of a certain Mister David Perry. He's Captain Big Cheese at Shiny Productions, the software house that's responsible for the phenomenally successful Earthworm Jim series of platform games. Apart from being a popular videogame character, Earthworm Jim is also the star of his own Stateside TV series. You can safely assume that David's got pots of cash stashed away somewhere. How's your bank account doing, eh? Eh?

But wait – it doesn't end there. Whereas most UK coders end up slaving away in development houses situated in soul-destroying 'business parks', in the rainiest, cloudiest quadrant of the arse-end of beyond, David has wound up spending each working day in Laguna Beach, possibly the sunniest and most glamorous part of sunny, glamorous California. And as if to add insult to injury, he's tall, dark and handsome to boot. Ahh – feeling sick now, are we? Thought so.

Still, it isn't as if he hasn't earned his success – the bastard. Right now, Shiny are poised to unleash *MDK* on the PC-gaming public. It's an arcade title that manages to be drop-dead gorgeous, intelligent, and highly playable, all at the same time. Check out my review on page 82 if you require further proof.

All things considered, you'd expect David to be very optimistic about the future, right? Wrong. He's predicting a gigantic shake-up in the software world – one that will see many of today's leading software houses lying broken by the wayside. Want to know why? So do we...

Why call your company Shiny?
Well, because REM are cool and because we want to make highly polished games...

In your press bio, it says that you like Clannad. Defend yourself, sir!
Well, I can't dance for shit...

Laguna Beach sounds like an incredibly glamorous and exciting place to live, but what's the worst thing about being based there?
Too many distractions: it's like bloody *Baywatch* just down the road. We would get so much more work done if we were back in Egham.

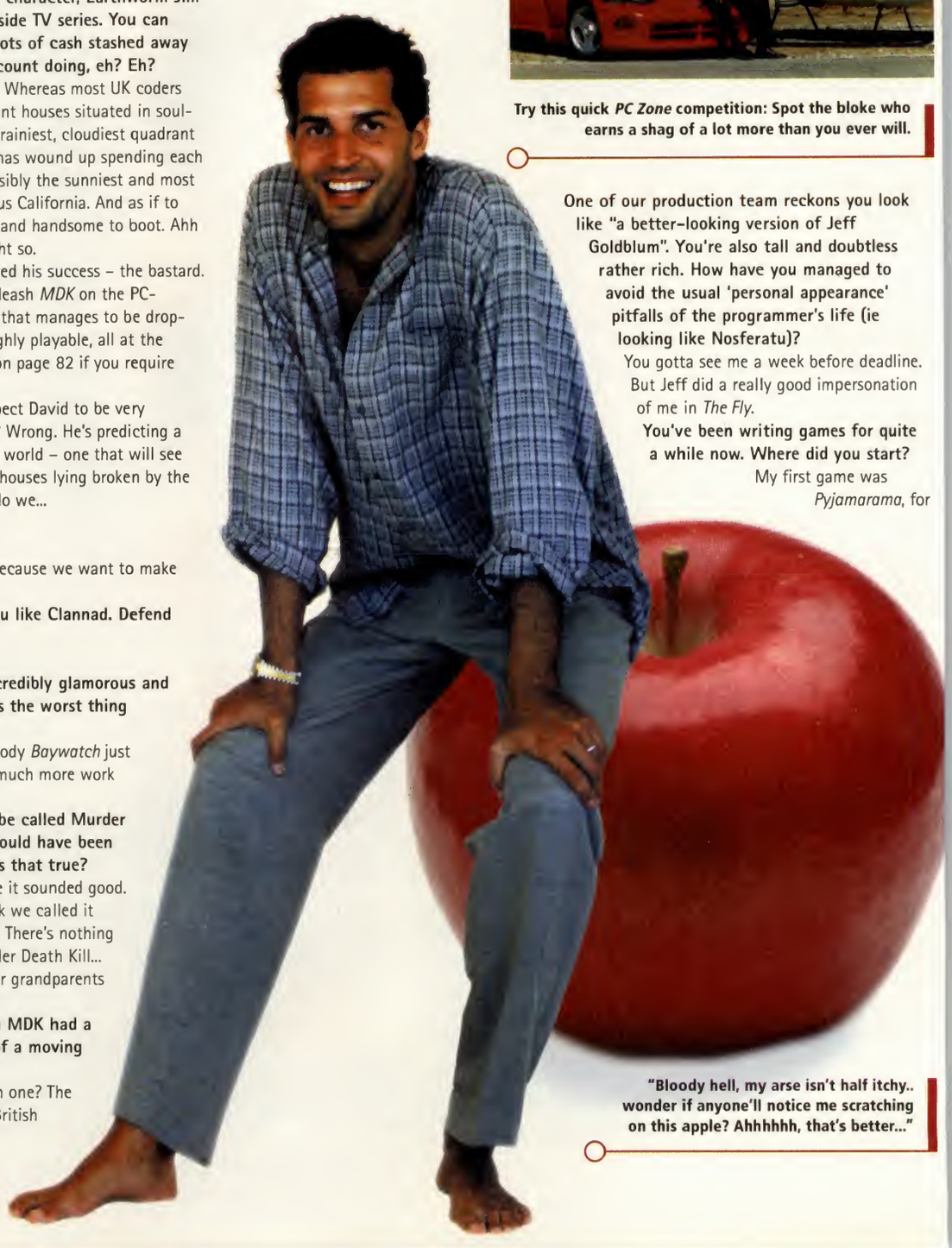
I heard that MDK was going to be called Murder Death Kill, but that the name would have been considered 'illegal' in the USA. Is that true?
MDK was called *MDK* just because it sounded good. Then, when we filed the trademark we called it "Max, Dr Fluke Hawkins and Kurt". There's nothing really 'illegal' about the title Murder Death Kill... it's just a little difficult to ask your grandparents for as a present

If Earthworm Jim and Kurt from MDK had a bare-knuckle fist-fight on top of a moving train, who would win?
The weaker one would lose. Which one? The one who had just eaten a whole British Rail sandwich.

Try this quick *PC Zone* competition: Spot the bloke who earns a shag of a lot more than you ever will.

One of our production team reckons you look like "a better-looking version of Jeff Goldblum". You're also tall and doubtless rather rich. How have you managed to avoid the usual 'personal appearance' pitfalls of the programmer's life (ie looking like Nosferatu)?
You gotta see me a week before deadline. But Jeff did a really good impersonation of me in *The Fly*.

You've been writing games for quite a while now. Where did you start?
My first game was *Pyjamarama*, for



"Bloody hell, my arse isn't half itchy.. wonder if anyone'll notice me scratching on this apple? Ahhhhhh, that's better..."

your game?

Sometimes the pressure can be just too much. Following our interview, David balanced on top of a rock in this position for three whole days (above). Some kids came along and started throwing nuts and things at him, and he still didn't move. Even when he went to the toilet. Honest.

Mikrogen. I had never written a game before, and somebody at Mikrogen challenged me to write the Amstrad version. I had no idea what the structure of a game was like, so I just started to program it randomly. My code was so long it barely made sense. So there it was, my first piece of games writing experience, and it was getting 'five out of five' reviews. I think one of the magazines gave it 98%. You could say I was pretty surprised.

Wilma Week (from 3 Weeks In Paradise and Everyone's A Wally) reminds me of Pam Anderson...

I know, that damn David Hasselhoff, copying our ideas...

What do you think of the recent trend for 'retro' gaming? Have you tried out any of those ZX Spectrum emulators available on the Internet?

I love all that stuff! There's a board in Canada or somewhere that's got almost every Spectrum game ever written. Weird. I went there and found all my old stuff. I mean, most of these games are absolute crap. It's easy to get all nostalgic and say: "Oh, I remember this great game I used to play", and then you load it up today and it's just 'ugh!' But some of them had really neat ideas – ideas that are still worth 'pinching' and using today.

Isn't it ironic then, that as platforms become more sophisticated, the software houses seem to be thinking less and less about the content of their games?

That ties in with my prediction – my big, big nasty prediction for the future.

Which is?

That most companies will go bust.

What? How? No!

I'll tell you why. 3D graphics have come along, and they're getting better and better, almost by the minute. You can see the speed with which they're progressing. And eventually, what are they going to do? You can keep adding polygons, so you go from a million, to a billion, to a trillion or whatever... but it won't make any difference. Once you have ten thousand polygons in a single character, no one's going to notice any further improvement. At some time in the next three to five years that's going to happen. And what are we going to do then?

You're going to have the best driving game, the best soccer game – you know, one where you can recognise all the players, all their facial expressions, every hair on their head, that sort of thing going on – a really, really real simulation. And that's when it's going to run out. Because at the moment the only reason people keep buying soccer games is that they keep getting better. At some point, that improvement is going to become totally insignificant, an illusion. And that's when I think fantasy will come back.

Just like the good-old days?

We were in complete fantasy in those days, because there was no chance of doing a soccer simulation. The hardware wasn't up to it. Think about the early arcade machines – those guys were forced to be entirely original.

So how will Shiny survive this 'Realism Apocalypse'?

What I'm doing on a day-to-day basis is trying to surround myself with people who'll be able to hack it in three or four years time. Talented people. In the old days, for instance, you could be a really crap animator and no one could tell because you had only three or four frames of animation to work with in the first place. Nowadays, you see those people trying to animate 3D models, and they're falling over themselves trying to keep it looking 'live'.

It's like High Definition television: it will shake up the TV industry because all the crap sets they make won't work any more; they're going to have to start making really really detailed ones. To survive in the games industry, you're going to need the best people. And I'm constantly on the hunt for them.

Hmm. Finally, Dave – what use is a PC if you're not playing games on it?

It's bloody useless and a waste of electricity if you ask me.

Just how much detail can you possibly need to get destructive and trash a few galaxies or whatever?

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TRIL

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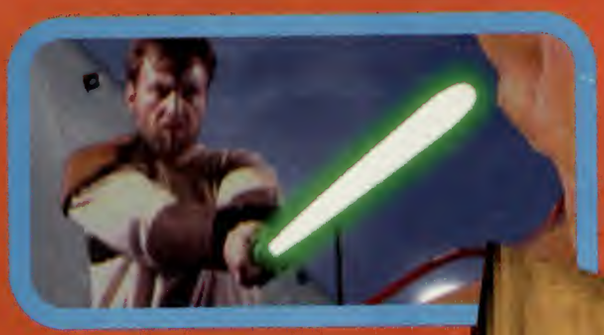
Windows 95 version released this Spring. Screenshots shown are from the PlayStation version. © 1996 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, "Die Hard" © 1988 Twentieth Century Fox, "Die Hard 2: Die Harder" © 1990 Twentieth Century Fox, "Die Hard With A Vengeance" © 1995 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation Cinergi Pictures Entertainment Inc. and Cinergi Productions NV Inc. All Rights Reserved. "Twentieth Century Fox", "Fox" and their associated logos are the property of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. SEGA and SEGA Saturn are trademarks of Sega Enterprises Ltd. "PlayStation" and ⊕ are trademarks of Sony Entertainment Inc.

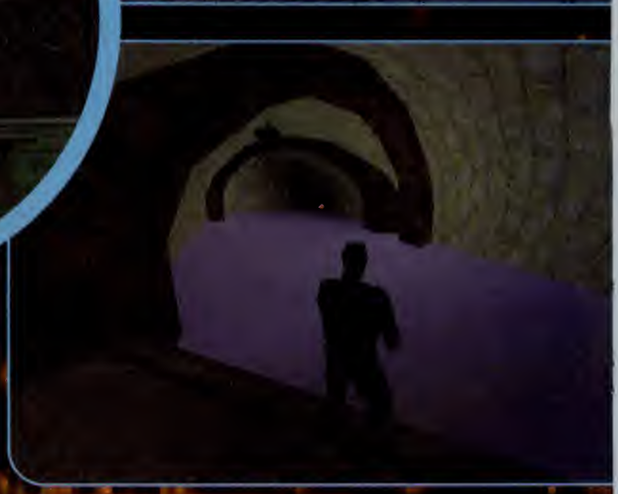


JEDI

"With the Force there are two paths one may take, nothing in-between. One leads to a full life, no matter the years. Justice, knowledge and compassion are both endeavours and rewards. The other is most assuredly a short path that leads to untamed power. With nothing to earn, it leads to a certain solitaire end. One should choose wisely."

Rhan – Jedi Master

KNIGHT: DARK FORCES 2



Prepare to be amazed: the sequel to one of the greatest PC games ever will soon be with us. Yep, *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* is due for a summer release, and those tremendously helpful bods at LucasArts have very kindly taken a few moments out of their busy schedule to talk to *PC Zone* and give us an EXCLUSIVE preview of what promises to be the biggest game of the year.

It's important to point out that although a large element of code is in place, there are many things left to consider and implement. What follows over the next few pages will blow your socks off, but it's merely intended to whet your appetites because many things will change, and some things will just get better. One thing's for certain: you will be amazed.

DARK FORCES WAS THE ONLY **Doom-clone that actually stood up to the ground-breaking original. Not only did it have a more advanced engine (you could look up and down), but it brought several new innovations to the genre, including a more involving storyline, greater variation in level design and a much stronger sense of exploration and immersion.**

Despite the game being a massive success the world over, some criticised it for being too short and for not having any multi-player options. The chaps at LucasArts have responded to these criticisms head on and are currently in the process of producing what looks like being one of the most innovative single and multi-player games ever devised. "The multi-player features in *Jedi Knight* are exactly what *Dark Forces* fans demanded the most in the sequel," remarks co-Project Leader Justin Chin. "In addition, we've incorporated cinematic live-action cut-scenes and the ability for players to use light sabres and the Force, making this a truly exceptional *Star Wars* experience."

Initial indications suggest that *Jedi Knight* will be to *Quake* what *Dark Forces* was to *Doom*. Every element that made *Dark Forces* the game it was has been expanded and improved. The plot is even more intriguing and captivating, the 3D engine is technically one of the most impressive we've seen, and the range of characters, weapons and levels is astounding. And then there's the addition of multi-player options and the chance for players, finally, to get their hands on a light sabre and use the Force. It sounds too good to be true.

The story so far...

It's a sequel so, as you'd expect, the plot follows on from where the first game left off. Once again, the player assumes the role of Kyle Katarn, a young mercenary sent by the Rebels to infiltrate the Empire. Through a series of live-action sequences, *Jedi Knight* picks up the story of Katarn as he embarks on a quest into his past and relates how he must learn the mysterious ways of the Jedi. With this knowledge, and with a little guidance from his mentor, Rhan, he must stop seven Dark Jedi from unlocking the powers of a hidden Jedi burial ground and avenge his father's death. Kyle's massive task forces him to confront his own dark past (let's face it, everyone's got a few skeletons in their closet) and he must decide his destiny. If he chooses the Dark Side, he will quickly come into enormous power and forever break from good. If he opts for the Light Side, he faces seemingly insurmountable evil. Whichever path Katarn chooses will change the face of the galaxy forever.

One of the key elements of *Jedi* is something that was touched upon in *Dark Forces*, and that's the sense of involvement and character development. The player is Kyle. He has a history, he is a part of and a product of his environment. Consequently, the player, as Kyle, must take on his persona and have an understanding of where he fits into the *Star Wars* universe to progress through the game. As a result, the *Jedi* team have made a huge effort to make the player feel like part of the game world by introducing highly visual cut-scenes and FMV segments that help set the tone. There are no mission briefings in *Jedi*, just little snippets that add an extra element to the story, little insights into the *Star Wars* universe. It's essentially up to the player to work out what's going on, what he must do and how he's going to do it.

For the first time in this kind of game, the player will be forced to make crucial decisions that will change the path the game follows and have a serious bearing on the plot.

LucasArts have drawn on RPG elements and come up with an experience points system that will allow the player to customise their character fully.

(Above) Unlike *Dark Forces*, *Jedi Knight* features characters that are constructed from texture-mapped polygons which means more realistic movement. If you've got a 3D accelerator card in your PC you can expect unlimited frames of animation thanks to a routine that will automatically add extra moves that are interpolated between key frames for super smooth animation. Although LucasArts have confirmed that *Jedi* will support Direct3D, they are yet to reveal if they will support any one card specifically.

JEDI KNIGHT

Choosing the Dark Side might be more immediately gratifying, but it will lead the player down one path as he learns the most destructive uses of the Force.

Sure you can decide whether you shoot at civilians or just run away in other games of this ilk, but in *Jedi* you'll actually be forced to make a moral choice – are you good or bad? Do you choose to be a Dark or Light Jedi? Whatever your choice, it will have a serious bearing on the final outcome of the game.

Use the Force

In *Dark Forces*, Kyle was essentially a mercenary who relied on his wit, guile and blaster to stay alive. In *Jedi* he'll still have his trusty Bryar Pistol, but he'll also be able to use the mystical power of the Force and the mighty light sabre for the very first time in his struggle against the Empire.

The Force will allow the player to build up his character and mould him to his own particular preferences. As Katarn learns the arts of the Jedi, he will have to decide which side of the Force to lend his powers. Choosing the Dark Side might be more immediately gratifying, but it will ultimately lead the player down one path as he learns the most destructive uses of the Force. The Light Side requires restraint and discipline and only the positive elements of the Force may be drawn upon, though this will be more rewarding in the end.

One of the most intriguing and interesting elements of *Jedi Knight* is the way in which you develop your Jedi powers. To develop a greater bond between the player and Kyle (let's face it, did you ever really care about the marine in *Doom* or *Quake*?), LucasArts have drawn on common-place RPG elements and come up with an experience points system that will allow the player to customise their character fully.

(Above) The 'true 3D' environment means more exploration.

Consequently, when a player completes a mission or a certain task he will receive a set number of 'Force' points that he can use to build up his character as a whole or 'spend' on a specific Jedi ability to make his character more proficient in a certain skill. Although it's yet to be decided exactly how and in what quantities, players will gain experience points when they complete a mission, use their light sabre in combat, find secret areas and defeat another Jedi or Jedi enemy.

All the Jedi experience points that a player earns will go into a Well. This pool acts in a similar way as ammo does with weapons except that it regenerates over time. Every time you use a Jedi ability you draw from the Well, so players will have to use their Jedi abilities wisely, especially when their character is young and lacking in experience.

Rank and ability

As every *Star Wars* fan knows, the power of the Force don't come easy

(Above) Players will be encouraged to use their light sabre in combat, even if a more conventional blaster might seem like an easier option. Experience points will be awarded for successful kills.

(Top) Around 45 minutes of FMV will keep the plot flowing. Here Jedi Master Rhan battles it out with the evil Jerec. (Above) Not all the action will take place in confined corridors. Levels will be more varied than ever.

to a man. The Jedi may have a wealth of skills and abilities that distinguish them from other intergalactic warriors, but they are earned over time, and only with patience and discipline. In *Jedi*, each ability will have a bar that shows the amount of experience that has been 'spent' on developing it. This bar will determine how good your character is at that ability, or his 'rank'. A character's ability ranking effects the strength, duration or the amount of damage inflicted when an ability is used.

Each Jedi, whatever their persuasion, will have a common list of basic abilities they can use and develop as they become more experienced. These will range from basic skills that will enable a Jedi to defend himself and generally allow him to move quicker, jump further and even see though walls (like a kind of extra sense). Once a player has gained enough experience points he will be able to develop his Dark or Light abilities, which are much more powerful and advanced. The Light Side abilities are geared towards protecting and preserving the Jedi, while the Dark abilities are more destructive and attack oriented. If, for some reason, a player decides to switch sides, he will lose all the experience he has 'spent' in the opposite side, or in the words of Chin: "There is no refund on experience spent."

As well as gaining experience by completing missions, players will be able to train their characters between

Meet The Gang

***Jedi Knight* is packed full of characters and uses FMV (around 45 minutes worth) to set the scene and keep the plot moving.**

Kyle must face and defeat seven Dark Jedi, who are led by the thoroughly evil Jerec, to save the Valley of the Jedi, an ancient burial ground, and avenge his father's honour. Each Jedi represents a distinct archetypal personality as in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*.

1 JEREC

The leader of the pack, Jerec is an extremely accomplished Jedi thanks to his in-depth knowledge of the Force and the Well. He has all the powers of the Dark Side and is immensely powerful because he has absorbed some of the Void from the Valley of the Souls. You will need to have the full power of the Force, a lot of skill and a fair bit of luck to even stand a chance against him in combat.

2 BOC

Boc is a rather brash and loud individual who likes to toy with his opponents. Unlike any other Jedi, he always carries two light sabres, and is therefore a dangerous and formidable opponent in combat.

3 SARISS

Brimming with pure skill and wisdom, Sariss is one of the most powerful of the seven Jedi and is possibly the most deadly when it comes to hand-to-hand combat. Not the sort of girl you'd take home to meet the folks.

4 MAW

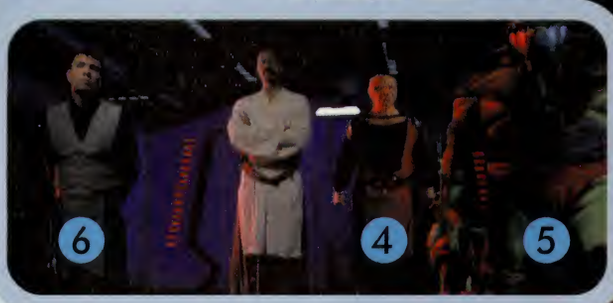
Maw was halved by Rhan in the beginning of the story and obviously isn't too chuffed that he's taken you under his wing. Although slow in his attack, he's deadly when he makes contact, so watch out and try not to stare at his head, it just makes him angry.

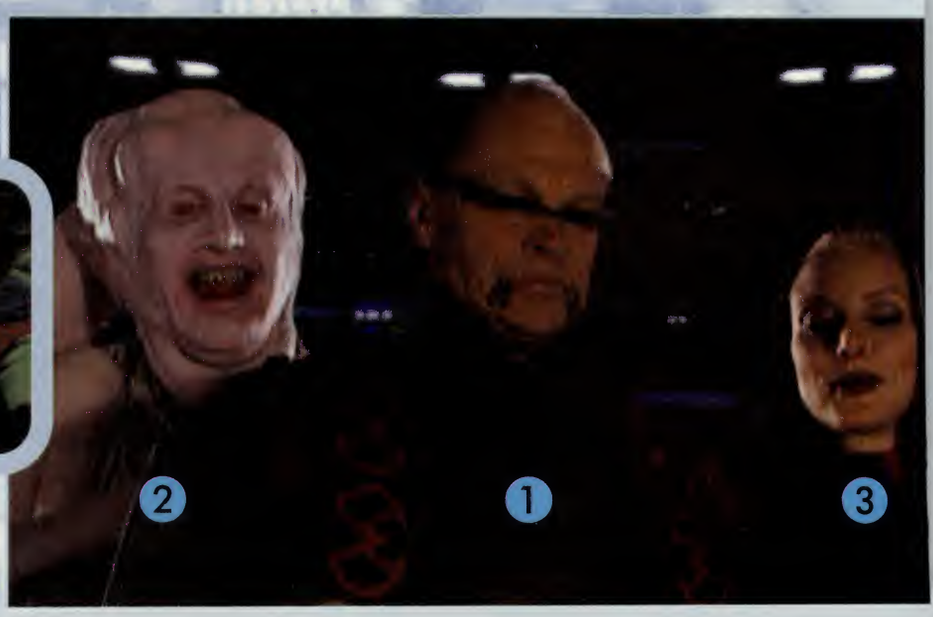
5 GORE AND PIC

You wouldn't think that they were twins (Gore is a massive eight foot tall creature and his counterpart Pic is only four feet tall) but they are. They work together to outwit any potential combatant with a variety of moves and tactics that will confuse and confound you.

6 YUN

The youngest of the seven Dark Jedi, Yun is impetuous and unpredictable. What he lacks in experience he makes up for in ambition and potential. Although he's a little scrawny, he's very athletic and was never the last to be picked at school for soccer at playtime.





JEDI KNIGHT

One of the most intriguing and interesting elements of* Jedi Knight *is the way in which you develop your Jedi powers.

missions to make them more proficient through engaging in combat with enemies they have already fought. As well as building up experience, this feature will allow players to practise various combat moves and learn how to defend themselves against a variety of attacks. This innovative feature encourages players to customise and develop their characters, and will also serve as a 'quick fix' style option for players who want a quick game of combat without endangering their Jedi campaign.

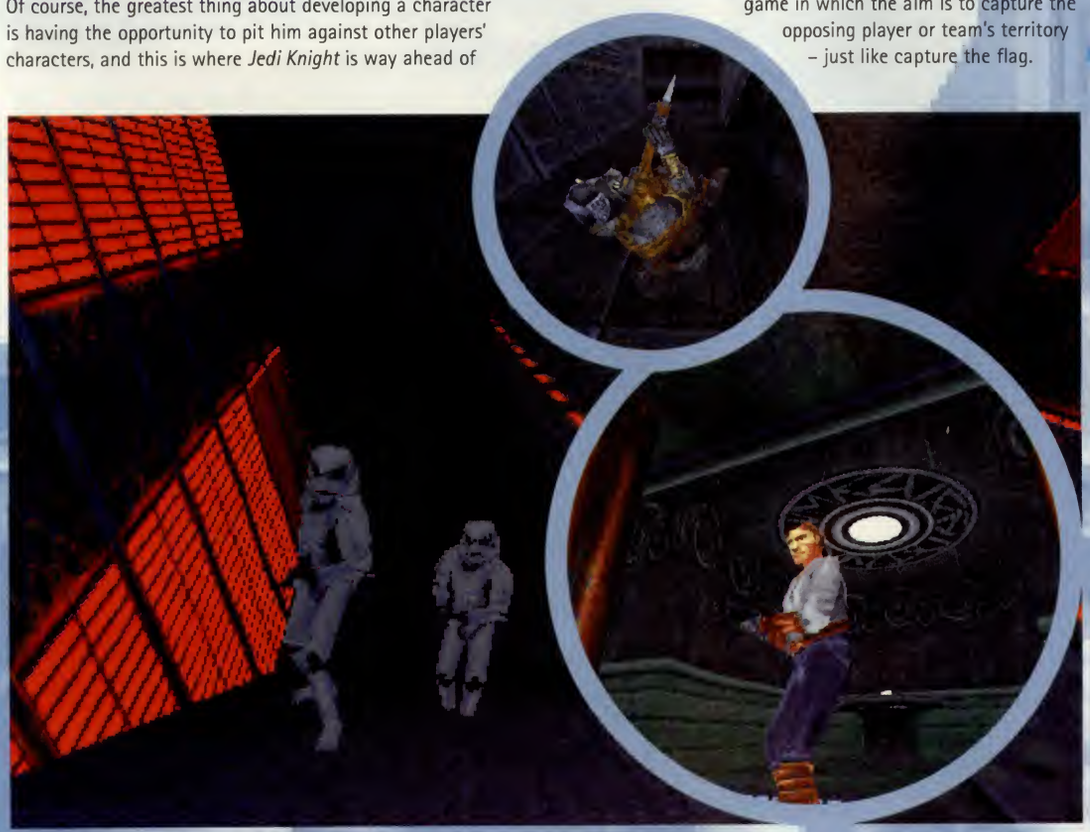
Overall, there will be massive scope for players who want to develop their character in the true RPG tradition. This approach makes *Jedi Knight* much more than just another shoot 'em up and, hopefully, it will encourage a greater involvement from the player as they nurture their very own Jedi Knight. As Chin explains: "We're trying to base the whole game on characters and abilities. What moulds your character is the single-player game. As you play the single-player game, you'll develop abilities."

Multi-player heaven

Of course, the greatest thing about developing a character is having the opportunity to pit him against other players' characters, and this is where *Jedi Knight* is way ahead of the pack. *Dark Forces* was criticised for not having a network option and LucasArts have really taken this to heart.

Jedi Knight will support up to eight players over a LAN and feature various different types of multi-player gaming options. To play a network game, you need to have a character saved from a single-player game, which you then import into the multi-player arena. At present, LucasArts are looking to include three exclusive dedicated multi-player levels that will not be accessible in one-player mode, as well as any single-player levels that might be suitable or easily adaptable.

There'll be three modes of play: Total Combat, Team Combat and Territory Combat. The first is the familiar Deathmatch – an all-against-all affair in which wins are calculated and experience points given at the end of the level. In Team Combat mode, players choose to play in a team and then experience is awarded for wins. There'll also be a modifier for the winning team and the number of team members on the team – or to put it another way, a team with only two players who managed to beat a team with four players will get a bonus. Territory Combat mode is a head-to-head or team network game in which the aim is to capture the opposing player or team's territory – just like capture the flag.



(Above) In addition to the first-person viewpoint, players will be able to opt for a third-person perspective which will help with puzzle solving. The environment will be immersively interactive so stray blaster shots will destroy various objects etc.

(Above) Texture-mapped polygon characters mean better animation.

(Above) LucasArts have worked hard to ensure that the camera in the third-person view will not impede gameplay, and still be cinematic to give a sense of size and depth. The scale of the levels will be on a par with *Tomb Raider*.

"The multi-player features in* Jedi Knight *are exactly what* Dark Forces *fans demanded the most in the sequel."
– Justin Chin, co-Project Leader

Tools Of The Trade

As well as his light sabre, Kyle will have access to a range of weapons and equipment to help him on his quest.

BRYAR PISTOL
Kyle's weapon of choice, it's actually a cut-down version of an old modified rifle. It's very accurate, but a bit low on power.

STORMTROOPER RIFLE
The standard weapon of Stormtroopers. Not as accurate as the Bryar pistol.

THERMAL DETONATORS
Handy for clearing rooms and stopping pursuers. They can be thrown to explode on impact or set for a five second timer detonation.

REPEATER
A keeper from the Dark Trooper prototype armoury. It's a favourite of Kyle's because of the easy availability of ammo. It can be set to fire a rapid stream of pellet energy or shoot all three barrels at once.

TURRET GUN
As used by the snowtroopers in *The Empire Strikes Back*. With or without tripod.

IM (IMPERIAL MACHINES) MINES
These are much beefier than thermals and are placed on the ground. They have both timer and proximity settings.

LIGHT SABRE
The trusty weapon of the Jedi Knight as well as the Dark Side, this is the most powerful weapon in the game. You will not be able to defeat the stronger Jedi without it and you can use it to block blaster fire and defend yourself. You've gotta get good with this to get very far into the game.

Although nothing has yet been seen of the Internet play option, it's obviously something LucasArts are very keen to take the lead in. The problem they're facing at the moment is that the 3D world they've created is just so detailed. Their Jedis are so complex that getting a decent, playable ping is proving to be quite difficult, especially when you consider the number of moves each character is capable of (yeah, "if *QuakeWorld* can do it..." but you can't use a light sabre in *Quake*, can you? It's a little more complicated than click, click, swing. It's a light sabre, not an axe). However, the programmers maintain that the multi-player performance over the Internet will be superior to *Quake*. We'll just have to wait and see and take their word for it for now.

What's most important is the potential of what the team is trying to accomplish. The opportunity to build up your own Jedi character in the one-player and training modes and then introduce him into an on-line multi-player environment will no doubt bring a whole new sense of challenge and discipline to the multi-player genre and, understandably, LucasArts are very excited about it.

The world of *Star Wars*

If there's one thing that'll strike you as you look at these pages, it's the detail and resolution of the screenshots. If you think that *Jedi Knight* looks pretty good here, you should see it moving.

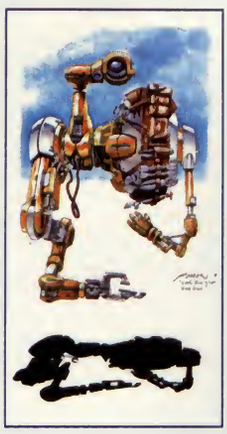
The main difference from *Dark Forces* is the introduction of a next-generation 3D engine (similar to *Quake*) that uses polygonal characters instead of sprites and as a result has a much greater scope for movement. And it's fast, even in hi-res. The secret seems to be in the polygon count. Although the characters, ships and environment look as though they're bursting with polygons, they're actually made up of less than you might think. The trick is, they're extremely well texture-mapped and shaded, which makes the hard edges of the polygons look less angular and therefore easier on the eye.

Fewer polygons allow for greater scope in terms of frames of animation that translates to smoother, more realistic movement. Remember that unlike *Dark Forces* and *Quake*, you can play *Jedi Knight* from both first-person and third-person perspectives, and in many cases you'll be watching your character as he performs numerous different types of blocks, thrusts, ducks, leaps and parries – in other words, your character will be strutting his stuff right in front of you, so it's got to look good. This, coupled with a true 'go anywhere' 3D environment that features slopes, bridges, walkways and even vehicles, means that just like CenterParcs, there'll always be plenty to see and do, even if it's raining.

Total control

Unlike *Dark Forces*, *Jedi Knight* will have a much stronger puzzle and exploration element to it which owes more to Core Design's *Tomb Raider* than many of the other next-generation 3D blast 'em ups due for release this year. Just like in *Mario64*, the player will be able go anywhere, run, jump and even swim as they explore the virtual *Star Wars* environment and this is one of the reasons LucasArts

JEDI KNIGHT



Product details

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: VIE
Release Date: June/July
Website: http//:www.LucasArts.com

(Left) A lot of care and attention has gone into producing characters that will move and act like human opponents. The seven Dark Jedi will all use different weapons and tactics in an attempt to outwit the player in combat and you'll have to learn how to defend yourself if you're to defeat them.

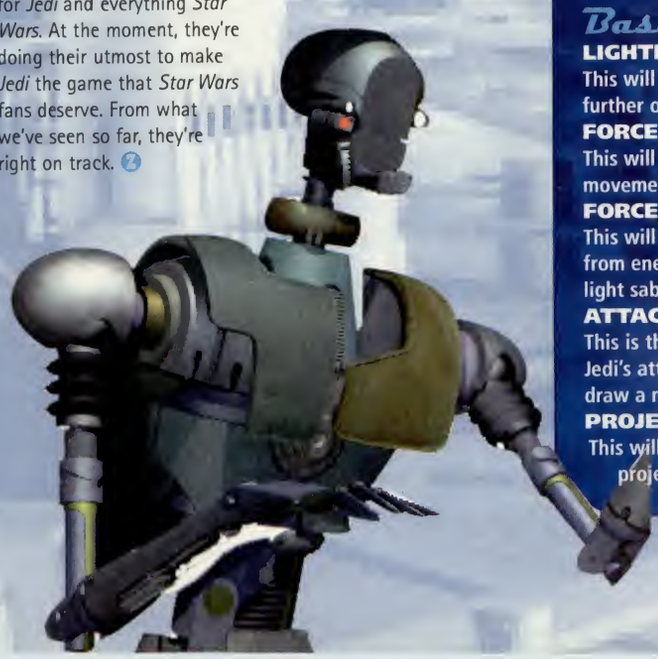
decided to incorporate a third-person perspective. The other reason is melee combat. *Jedi Knight* is the first game in which you'll be able to get your hands on a light sabre and use it to attack and defend yourself.

Now we all know that the hand-to-hand melee combat in *Quake*, *Doom* and *Duke* is so limited, it's just not worth bothering about. The problem is that it's just so hard to do properly from a first-person perspective. LucasArts are well aware of the shortcomings of this control system and have been busy devising an innovative mouse/keyboard combo set-up and camera system that should give the player unprecedented control. Ideally, the player will use a mouse/keyboard set-up, where the mouse handles most of the movement and sabre play in a fashion similar to *Quake* 'look', and the left hand looks after strafing, jumping and backward and forward movement.

Six different types of sabre movement will be available, split into two types of manoeuvre: attack and block. You'll be able to execute high, centre and low attacks/blocks by moving your mouse forward, centre and back, relatively instinctively. You'll also be able to strafe and dodge backwards, as well as duck and jump. It might sound a bit complicated, but when you think about it, you've probably been going through the motions subconsciously when you've been playing Deathmatch *Quake* and dodging a hail of rockets, it's just that you didn't realise it. Essentially, it's one of those things that's easier to do than talk about. Like getting into debt.

May the Force be with you... always

Jedi Knight is undoubtedly LucasArts' most ambitious project to date and, if they can pull it off, it will be nothing less than awesome. The manner in which they've met the few criticisms levelled at *Dark Forces* and the way they've responded is highly commendable, as is their enthusiasm for *Jedi* and everything *Star Wars*. At the moment, they're doing their utmost to make *Jedi* the game that *Star Wars* fans deserve. From what we've seen so far, they're right on track.



Ready, Jedi, Go!

Each Jedi (whatever their persuasion) has a range of basic abilities that can be earned and that distinguish him (or her) from the rest of us. Once a player has gained enough experience points, they'll be able to access either the Dark or Light abilities. Players can only choose one side and, depending on their choice, they'll have the opportunity to fully customise their character as they gain more experience. Each ability has a sliding bar which shows how much experience has been 'spent' on it, or how proficient a character is in that certain ability or their 'rank'. This 'rank' affects strength, duration or damage inflicted. If a player decides to switch sides, he'll lose all the experience that he puts into the opposite side.

Basic Abilities

LIGHTNESS OF BEING
This will give your Jedi the ability to jump further or flip longer.
FORCE JUMPS
This will speed up your Jedi's general movement, including jumps.
FORCE PULL
This will enable your Jedi to take weapons from enemies over distance or retrieve their light sabre.
ATTACK
This is the strength and damage of your Jedi's attack. It will always be on and will draw a minimal amount from your Well.
PROJECTILE BLOCK
This will enable your Jedi to block various projectiles with their light sabre.
SEEING
This will allow your Jedi to see enemies through walls. Range is dependent on power.
WELL REGENERATION
This will highlight your Jedi's ability to regenerate their Well over time. The higher the experience, the quicker it will regenerate.

Light Side abilities

PERSUASION
This will make your Jedi invisible to enemies.
HEALING
This will allow your Jedi to boost their health.
REPEL
This will blast back your Jedi opponent from sword range. The stronger your Jedi, the further they will be pushed back.
PROTECTION
This is a static force field that will surround your Jedi and protect them from light sabre and blaster fire. The higher your rank, the stronger your force field.

Dark Side abilities

SWORD THROW
This will allow your Jedi to throw their light sabre at an enemy and it will return to their hand.
THE GRIP
Mr Bronson knows all about this ability. Your Jedi will be able to choke enemies and with increased rank, engage in some multiple choking.
LIGHTNING BOLTS
Only the Dark Jedi Master can have this. It lets him fire bolts of lightning at his enemies that will grip them with pain and damage.
DESTRUCTION
This is an exploding force field that takes excessive damage as well as pushing the opponent back.

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CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 (ENHANCED)

***Championship Manager 2* has been in the best-seller charts since its release. Patrick McCarthy went to ply its creators with Jaffa Cakes and put them off their work (much as he does in our office) to try and find out how they make their games so darned addictive. Jeremy Wells just went to eat the biscuits.**

(Top) Buy Richard Wright, or Daniel Bjebl. 2nd: Buy Peter Alexandrov, or Alexander Unger. 3rd: Buy Giovanni Pisano, or Gabriel Batistuta. (Bottom) Buy Poland!... Hang On...

WHILE ORDINARY MORTALS SUCH AS YOU or I go about our humdrum business doing little to improve the lot of humanity generally, strange things are happening in an ex-clinic in a quiet street in North London. Oliver and Paul Collyer, creators of the football management game that makes some people's lives worth living, are quietly working on their next offering. In fact, they're working on their next four offerings. While they're actively working on next season's version of CM2, they're also putting together the plans for Championship Manager 3, a multimedia history of football and an arcade football game.

We thought if we chatted to them long enough they'd let slip what kind of deal they pulled with the devil to make such an addictive game – if it didn't involve souls, which we don't have, we thought we might copy them.

It's easy enough to find their office among the oddly-named ex-surgeries that fill the building: you just look for the one with the big poster of Hristo Stoichkov on the door. Inside, the walls are hung with pennants of all the top football sides in the world (but Gillingham's seems to have been overlooked, sadly).

Oliver and Paul seem to have different personalities, but they complement each other well. If you wanted to be simplistic, you would probably say Oliver is more laid-back, whereas Paul seems the more pro-active. At times it was like a good-cop/bad-cop routine.

When we told them about the transfer cheat we found, Oliver laughed and said: "If that's the way people want to play it, that's up to them, I suppose." Paul, on the other hand, had opened that section of the code in seconds. "*That* won't work any more," he said, with a satisfied air. "In the next version, when an offer's accepted, you can't adjust it." Oh.

If we asked out of interest to see their ratings for a player we'd found to be good, Paul would look at the player and say, "He shouldn't be that good." And, seconds later, he wasn't. In the end, we stopped asking, because we wanted to keep some good players in the game. We also spoke about people who re-boot their machines when they lose a match, and while Oliver was shrugging his shoulders, resigned that someone would do such a thing, Paul was already suggesting an automatic save after every game. And so on...

They both have a strong sense of pride in their game. Anyway, we thought we'd start with the basics.

Zone: Do you ever play rival football management games?

Oliver: Not really. We look at them, but they're boring and they're just...

Paul: They're more concerned with fancy graphics and motion capturing than getting the realism right. And they don't take place in a real world. Everything is generated by what you do. If you don't click on something, nothing happens.

Zone: That's true. In *CM2*, you can start a game without taking control of any club...

Oliver: Yes, you can start it, and it'll run without your input. We try to create a complete football world in which transfers take place, games are won and lost and computer managers act intelligently, and where everyone has an equal chance of achieving things, or signing a player.

Paul: These other games are made by jobbing programmers. They're hired for the game, told what to do, and they do it. Whereas we love football, and we're doing this game because we want to...

Oliver: But if anyone came up with a game

(Above left) Ah. That returns a semblance of normality to the occasion. (Middle) Play Italian, English and Scottish leagues all at the same time. (Above right) See Francesco? I've had him – and sold him again.

Product details

Developer: Sports Interactive
Publisher: EIDOS Interactive
Website: www.compulink.co.uk/~champman/
Release date: September

that was a properly realised world...
Paul: But they won't. They're more interested in making it look pretty.
Oliver: ...We'd love it. We'd play that.
Zone: What about The Everton Thing in *CM2*?
Oliver: We're always accused of cheating for Everton. One Liverpool fan took it personally and wrote us a really nasty letter. But at the time we designed the game, Everton had a really good side. Yet everyone thinks we've fixed their ratings and made sure they sign the best players and win everything.
Zone: You have. Anders Limpar got European Footballer of the Year in one of my games after he'd moved to Brazil.
Paul: Did he? (*They exchange glances*)
We load a screen grab from CM2 *onto their PC.*
Zone: Oliver and Paul, do you recognise this screenshot?
Oliver: Yes.
Zone: And what is the screenshot?
Paul: Duncan Ferguson's ratings screen in *CM2*.
Zone: And what is Mr Ferguson's injury proneness rating?
Oliver: Ah. Er, yes, that's wrong.
Zone: What is Mr Ferguson's rating?
Oliver: Seven.
Zone: This is the same Duncan Ferguson who's played approximately 30 games for Everton in the past three years?
Oliver: I don't know how that happened.
Zone: You can't help yourselves, can you?
Oliver: Maybe not. Maybe there's some kind of subliminal effect working on us, so that we subconsciously cheat for Everton against our will.
Zone: Do you play your own game? Or do you both know it too well now to get any enjoyment out of it?
Oliver: No... well, we do, for testing and things... (*laughs*) but we're crap at it.
Paul: You got relegated when we played that one-season game with Mark *(Their Internet co-ordinator – Ed.)* that time...
Oliver: *(Laughing)* You only escaped by one point, on the last day of the season...
Paul: *(Laughing)* But I wasn't relegated.
Oliver: But at least I don't look like Graham Kelly.
(Everyone starts to laugh)
Zone: (*To Paul*) My God, you *do* look like Graham Kelly.
Paul: *(To Oliver)* Thanks, mate. Perhaps I should mention that you look like Gary McAllister...
Zone: We'll have to give you a game one day. A one-off season.
Oliver: Okay, yeah. Maybe we should all start with First Division teams or something.
Zone: We'll make sure you don't get your hands on it first. It'll have to come from a sealed box.
Paul: *(Laughing)* Remember that time you

> ***"Maybe there's some kind of subliminal effect working on us, so that we subconsciously cheat for Everton against our will."***

tried to cheat when we played _____? *(Name withheld to avoid punch-ups – Ed.)*
Oliver: *(Laughing)* I changed the code so that whatever Manchester United did, it would go wrong, because I knew he'd pick them. But it all went horribly wrong, and worked against my team instead.

It was terrible and the worst thing was I knew what was happening, but couldn't complain or stop playing without admitting what I'd done.
Zone: So do you play any other games?
Paul: *Duke Nukem* on our network.
Zone: Not *Quake*?
Oliver: No. *Quake* didn't run well on our Cyrix machines, so we stick with *Duke Nukem*. We prefer the varied weapons, ▶

You'll be able to pick your free kick, corner kick and penalty takers in the enhanced version of *CM2*, which should stop Gareth Southgate and eager beaver goalkeepers from losing you matches. At the moment, the chaps are working on a new zonal system that will allow you even more control over tactics and team management for *CM3*. Man-marking will be included too.

Next season: an at-a-glance guide

***Championship Manager 2 Enhanced* will be a stepping stone between *CM2* and *CM3*, which looks so good it will probably generate its own organised religion. Or not. Anyway, this is what you're going to get next season.**

- More leagues to play: the English, Scottish and Italian leagues will run concurrently.
- Their editor, so you can fiddle with stuff to your heart's content.
- Fully updated squads; new 24-team Champions League format; player histories for everyone in the game.
- Selectable penalty, free kick and corner takers.
- The return of 'Continental' playing style; a 'Passing' style that will finally work properly; U-21 international squads and matches; messages about transfers, results and injuries.
- Improved end-of-season awards.
- Improved match comments will be available.
- An option to 'retire' when you've had enough.

◀ anyway. Setting off those proximity bombs, hiding in ventilators and stuff, is more enjoyable in multi-player games. *(To Paul)* You and Mark are better than I am, though. I get killed all the time...

Paul: You do, yes.

Oliver: I just stand there like an idiot, dying. You've both had more practice though.

Zone: Is that because you do all the work?

Oliver: Probably.

Zone: So what's going to be in the new version of *CM2?*

Oliver: The tactics screen will be expanded slightly. Not as much as in *CM3* – that's going to be completely different. In *CM3* you'll be able to design and save different formations and playing styles, but to use them effectively you'll have to practise them with your coaches.

Zone: Coaches?

Paul: There are coaches to train the team in different areas, and there'll be a proper chairman and Board to handle financial matters, takeovers etc. You'll be left to handle team matters, but they might ask your advice about certain things. It depends on the club and country you're in.

Oliver: The fans will be more involved. They might be angry with you or with the chairman. Transfer negotiations will be more complex, too. You'll have to deal with the player, but also his club. You might be able to pay a transfer fee in instalments, and there'll be sell-on fees, and the facility to negotiate extra money if the player becomes an international and so on. There will be 13 different leagues to play in – that's anywhere in the world, practically. This is some way off, so we don't know what machines people will have, but it's going to need a fair bit of memory to run. We'll know nearer the time.

Zone: But that stuff's for *CM3*.

Oliver: Yeah. In *CM2 Enhanced* there'll still be improvements. You'll be able to play Continental style again. And the Passing style should work properly now.

Zone: You said that last time.

Paul: *(Laughs)* Well it will this time. I've totally re-written the match engine. And it's going to come with an editor.

Zone: What, the one you use?

Paul: Yeah, and it will run three leagues at the same time if you have 16 meg – English, Scottish and Italian leagues. There'll be the new Champions League format, which is six groups now.

Oliver: There'll be little touches here and there in the gameplay – like selectable set-piece takers, and so on.

Paul: There are more advanced versions of most of this planned for *CM3*, but we've been working on this now for two months and we want to get it done in another month or so, and get on with *CM3*. We're interviewing people for programming jobs for that.

Oliver: It's going to be weird, having other people write it and us overseeing it. We'll probably still do some of the central coding... But we want programmers who are into football and know what we're talking about.

Paul: If anyone mentions motion capturing, they can fuck off.

Finally, we left the building in good spirits. The future of civilised football seemed to be in good hands. It was only when we got to the tube that we realised we'd forgotten to ask them about their deal with Satan. Z

(Above) In the new main screen, your team has already been chosen.
(Right) Full International Under-21 squad action is yours for the asking. Note the lack of Everton bias in Michael Branch's star status.

What we really want

We gave the chaps a lengthy list of what we feel is wrong with the current version, and what we would like to see in the new one. And they still talk to us. Among the things we mentioned were:

- A proper reserve team to develop young players and bring injured first team players back from injury.
- Proper goalkeeper ratings.
- A player comparison facility.
- A worldwide game, so you can get a job anywhere you like.
- More flexible cross-referencing when searching for players.
- Selectable half-time scores from other games, for close end-of-season finishes.

There was much more than this, but many suggestions are too lengthy and/or tedious to go into here. Much of the stuff we mentioned had already been planned for *CM3* (there will be 13 different leagues to play in around the world, for example), and there was a lot of stuff they don't want us to mention just yet.

If you have any ideas, they're always open to suggestions (this is very unusual in game designers, which leads us to think they may be impostors). You can e-mail them at their own or the EIDOS Website or snail-mail them at EIDOS – likewise if you want to help in the research and ratings for *CM3*.

Get in touch and, if they're interested you'll be put through a rigorous testing procedure – along with everyone else.

FREE WITH EVERY GAME OF POD...

...A TANK FULL OF ADRENALIN

POD is not only the fastest, meanest racing game ever, it's also the first game to harness the incredible gameplay and graphics potential of MMX™, 3DFX and Pentium technologies. It's also the only game that allows you to play opponents either split screen, link, over the Internet, LAN or modem in any combination. In addition to a staggering 16 huge tracks and 8 fully customisable cars, you will be able to download new tracks and cars over the Internet or using upgrade kits.

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SUB CULTURE

Patrick McCarthy once got into a submarine at a naval base, and the resulting radiation dose ensured a nasty little micro-organic culture has grown in all his bodily creases ever since. Naturally, etc etc...

EVERY NOW AND THEN A GAME COMES along completely out of the blue, with no hype or bullshit, and turns out to be an unheralded classic. Sub Culture could well turn out to be one of those games. (Except, I suppose, that I'm just about to start hyping it...)

It's set underwater in a miniaturised submarine society – the subs are supposed to be about an inch long – that exists alongside humankind, suffering from the pollution and shit we pump into the seas. The game mostly takes place in the peril-fraught shallows, where tiny types can be crushed without warning by a giant foot or a drifting tampon, or pop to the local shops only to sail down the end of a used condom in a one-way ticket to oblivion.

Can do

You play a prospector who returns home one day to find your home crushed beneath a casually discarded tin can. Convinced that there is life above the surface – a heretical thought in your society – you set out on a quest for the truth. But you also have a more immediate need: survival in a hostile world. The result's an open-ended, mission-based game with a plotline that weaves in and out of the action. According to Marcus Lynn, the game's team leader: "*Elite*'s the only game that we'd actually say inspired us, because of the similarity of style in the trading and the mission aspects. There were no other games we could think of that had the same sort of freedom within an environment."

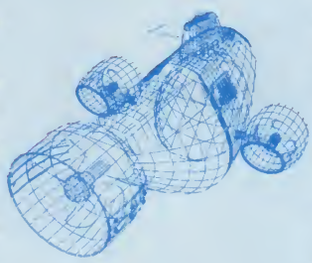
Tribal war

Most of the missions will involve a number of hazards. As Mike Williamson, the storyline editor, puts it: "The Frontier's a harsh environment, with warring factions. The first of these is the Bohines, who are a bit like hippies. They have tumbledown architecture with rust everywhere. They build stuff up out of old parts, a bit like the Wombles. They're at war with the Prochas, who are completely the reverse – they've got tidy, brushed metal architecture, and much better technology. You're still basically a prospector, though, so besides the missions, a large part of the game is to do with exploration of the environment, finding bits and pieces to take to the Refinery, where you can turn junk into more usable product to trade off in the cities."

Get yourself connected

The landscape itself isn't just boring old sand banks and floating turds, though. The seabed was first created as a height field of 80,000 polygons, onto which 3D objects were added, such as a can, old boots, a ribcage from a dead animal, a cave network and even an abyss. The cities of the two sides are distributed throughout the environment, and there are possibilities to play the sides off against each other. You can change sides as often as you like, running missions for either – although one of the sides may get a bit fed up with you always working for the enemy, and start to react with more hostility towards you.

During the game each side keeps in touch with you via



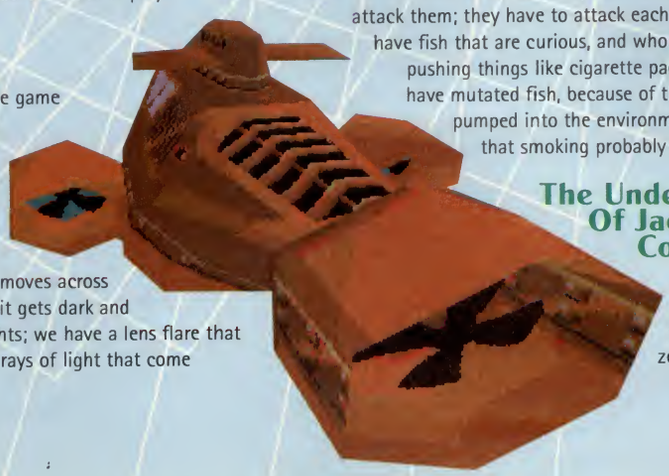
(Top) When you're being attacked by pirates, you need to be able to dock quickly. Fortunately, there's an automated docking procedure. (Bottom) Well, that's not going to keep the water out, is it? Cover it with papier maché or something for heaven's sake...

(Top) If you go into the caves on a mission, makes sure you buy some lighting. You might be inside a discarded sock. (Middle) There's all sorts of crap on the seabed, including old cigarette packets. Or is that an old condom packet? (Bottom) A very large walking thing caused Terence to violently evacuate his bowels.

e-mail systems, so you know what's going on when you get to a city. There are also news stories of what might be coming up, and while on a mission you'll be bombarded with information from the other submarines which hail you and tell you the state of play while you're at sea.

Splash

The lighting effects in the game are superb. Marcus Lynn says, "We wanted many lighting effects to give the undersea effect. For instance, we have a proper day and night cycle – the sun actually moves across the top of the world, so it gets dark and you have to use your lights; we have a lens flare that emanates from the sun; rays of light that come through the water's surface, and a dappling effect on the seabed as the light refracts off the waves. In the caves we have flares and strobes that the player can use to light his way."



But it's not just the lighting that makes the underwater setting so convincing. The subs really appear to be moving in water. A lot of maths went into it. "To create a realistic environment," explains Lynn, "we had to physically model all the objects, applying linear and rotational velocity, mass and gravity. The subs' engines have forces applied to them to make them move as if underwater. Among the tools you'll have is a magnet, linked to the sub via a chain, and all the physical properties of a magnet and chain are applied to the sub when you use them."

Your sub is very manoeuvrable. The engines rotate, so that you can go up and down, backwards and forwards. There are ten different types of sub, each race having three or four that vary in style. The high-tech Prochas have the undersea equivalent of BMWs, all shiny and modern, whereas the hippy Bohines' are very organic looking. If you saw them floating past you in the sea, you'd probably start glancing about for the location of the sewage outlet.

That's about all we have on it at the moment. From what we've seen, it looks like Criterion have really got everything sussed. *Sub Culture*'s set to be a completely engrossing game – we'll let you know as soon as we have a reviewable version.

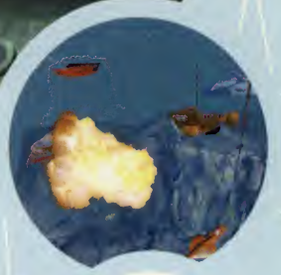
Gone fishing

So what else is in the sea apart from your own sub, and the fighting miniatures, then? Mark Rendle, senior artist, says, "Creatures in the game include stingrays, eels, seahorses and many different species of fish, all of which we tried to make as realistic as possible. We have shoals of fish in the game as well, but because there are so many on-screen at the same time we needed to make these types very low polygon. We have about 24 different types of creature in all, and each has its own texture and is animated. The programmers have given the creature artificial intelligence to move around the landscape."

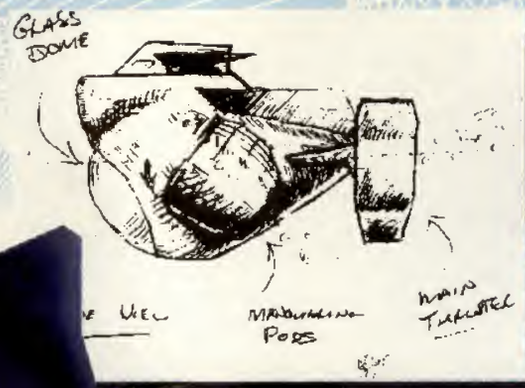
For research purposes they watched a lot of videos, studying the behaviour and movement of fish. Marcus Lynn says, "Realism was important to us from the start. This means the fish have to attack; they have to flee when you try to attack them; they have to attack each other. We actually have fish that are curious, and who go around the seabed, pushing things like cigarette packets around... we also have mutated fish, because of the toxic chemicals pumped into the environment by humans." All that smoking probably doesn't help, either.

The Undersea World Of Jacques Cousteau

Ah, Jacques Cousteau, ze mastair of sneakeng about benith ze ocean, pokeeng ma



(Top) Criterion's *Sub Culture* development team get down to some serious work. (Middle) No, they're not giant lionfish. You're very small. Get it into your stupid head, will you? (Bottom) Watch out for discarded omelettes floating down from the surface, ensnaring everyone.



Product details

Developer: Criterion Studios
Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Windows 95 only
Release Date: 2nd quarter 1997
Website: http://www.vie.co.uk.vie

◀ nerz into ze pravaht affaires of marine life, 'ave recently made an astoundaing dicovaireh: zat zere are, all around us, miniachewer races living beneath ze sea. Naturellement, Ah 'ave been investigateeng wiz mah team of divairs, mah fancy equipment and mah magnifahng glass. Zis is whert Ah ave foung:

Prochas

Ze Prochas are at ze forefront of underwatair technologie and are into 'igh-tech gadgetry in a beeg way. Zeir buildengs are beautiful, tahny odes to functionalism and minimalism. Ah lahk to think zey are a kahnd of miniachewer Frainch people. Zey are, no doubt, witty, elegong, and incredibly good in bed. Zey are also almost certainly ze peace-lovang, innocent victims of ze aggression of othair races. Watch as Phillipe, mah chief divair, pokes zem wiz a stick... Merde! Zey ave blown Phillipe out of ze watair avec some kahnd of lasair! Bollocques! ...Phillipe!... Phillipe! ...merde! 'E 'as become a great beeg sunken pizza... Zis is very interestang, actually. I wondair what will grow on 'im in years to come...

***Sub Culture* uses sophisticated fogging, lighting and rippling effects to give a fantastically atmospheric impression of depth and submersion.**

Bohines

Oh, ze Bohines. Ah despair of ze Bohines. Zey are laizy, dirtie and scruffy — no better zan 'ippies. Ze dirtiness Ah understand, being Frainch, but ze scruffiness zere is no call for. Look at zere shoes! Not un gold bar in sight. Zese people are engaged in a civil war avec ze poor innocent Prochas who unfortunalement killed Phillipe in a misunderstanding earliaire. Watch as René, mah reserve chief divair, pokes zem wiz a stick. Oh. Zey do nuzzing. Be careful René! It may be a tricque! René pokes zem again... still zey do nuzzing. René stays by zeir base as ordaired, poking zem wiz a stick for an hour. But zey are so slothful. Zey do nuzzing. Oh! What is zis? René is signalleeng... 'Ave zey tricked us? No, René is pointing at 'is throat. Are you trying to sing, René? Oh, it is ze airpipe at which he... René? ... René... ?

Refinery

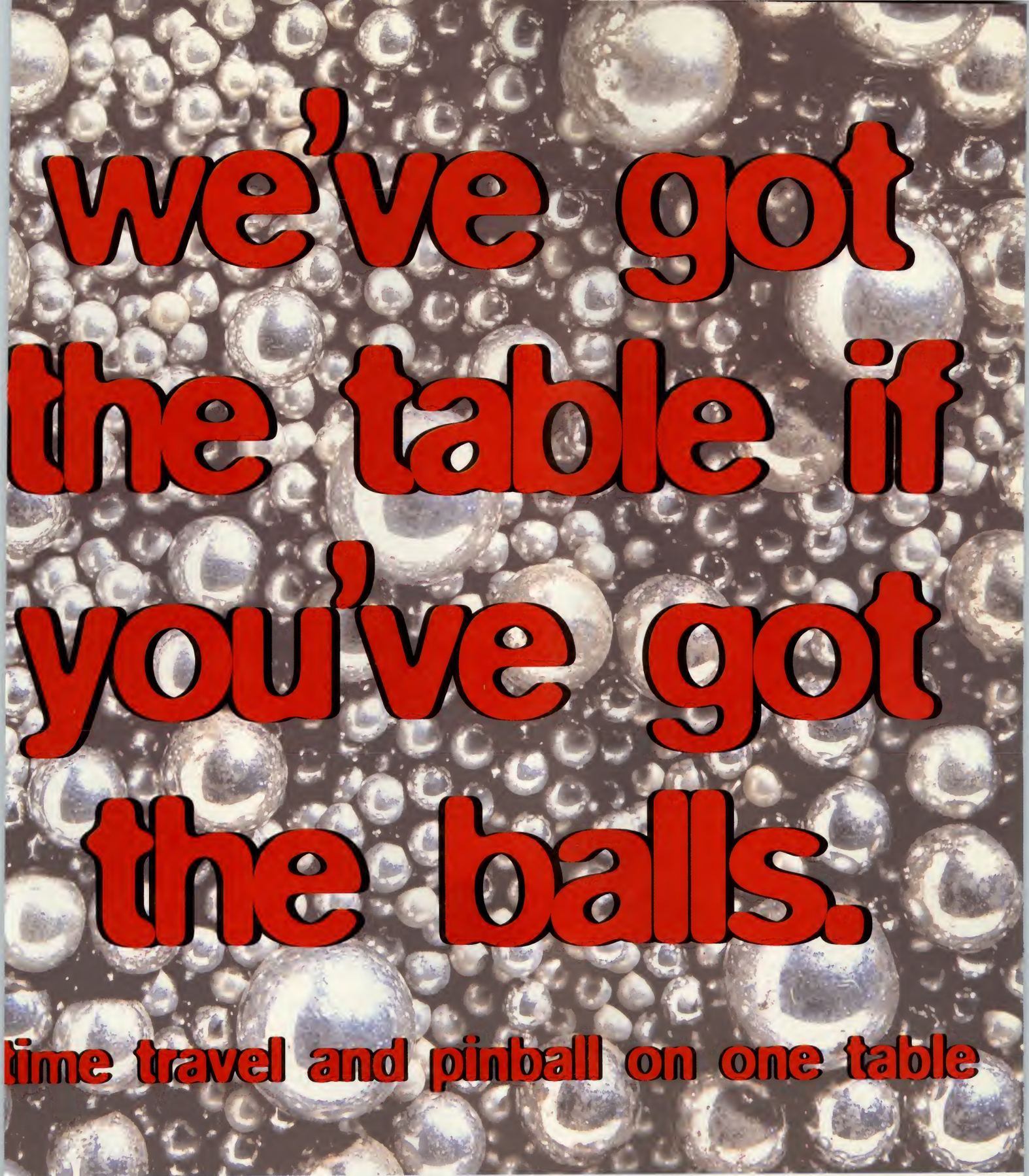
What can Ah say about zese Refinery creatures? Zey are mercenary capitalistes, selling weapons of destruction to anyone 'oo 'as ze monnaiy. As long as zey make monnaiy, zey are 'appy — rather like your Mr Mellor, Mr Archer and Mr Thatcher, non? Zey are no better zan prostitutes. (Unfortunalement, zey are not prostitutes or Ah, as a Frainchman, would feel obliged to visit zem to sample zeir wares. Ze fact zat zey are smaller than mah penneess would be merely anuzzer depraved novelty for me.) Now watch as Pierre, mah youngest divair, attempts to lure zem from zere miniachewer 'factory' by dangleeng small pictures of ze young Bridget Bardot at zere windows. Oh! Zey are not interested. Zey 'ave no soul. Now 'e tries to lever ze top of ze factory off wiz 'is stick. Ooop! Zey 'ave electrocuted 'is testicles wiz zere 'igh-tech security system! Poor Pierre — 'e is now no bettair zan a woman! ... In fact, in zat diving suit 'e looks rahzer... attractive... Excusez-moi un moment...

The seabed was first created as a height field of 80,000 polygons onto which 3D objects were added, such as tin cans, old boots, animal rib cages and even an abyss.

Pirates

Ze Pirates, zey are scum. Ze pirates would zink nothang ofsneakeng into anuzzer country's 'arbour and blowing an innocent ecological protest movement's ship out of ze watair. As a Franchman, zis behaviour sickens me to mah core... Watch carefully as ze pirate parents starve zere young so zat zey will be more aggressive when zey grow up. Watch now as Jean-Claude, mah YTS trainee divair, pokes zem wiz a stick. Zut alors! Zey 'ave stolen Jean-Claude's stick! Zey are 'olding him down and ramming it repeatedly into 'is... 'ow you say... jacquesie! Pauvre Jean-Claude! I thank it best we leave 'im to 'is fate... zere is no room in mah crew for un kebab...

Some early sketches of underwater craft. The architecture and subs reflect the races that uses them.



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DMA DESIGN

Charlie Brooker went to visit DMA Design in Dundee... and he hasn't been the same since...

APPARENTLY, BURNING TO DEATH IS THE single most unpleasant way to die. It takes longer than you think, it's excruciatingly painful, and aside from anything else, it smells funny. Dying by any other means you can think of is infinitely preferable (except, perhaps, being shagged to death by 'Big Ron' from EastEnders). Anyway, I'm mentioning this because the prospect of burning to death was very much on my mind during the journey to DMA Design's Dundee studios. For some reason I became extremely paranoid about the initial flight to Edinburgh, and had more or less convinced myself that the plane was going to crash, then catch fire, and that I would subsequently burn to death. I even considered holding onto the knife that came with the inflight meal figuring that, should my nightmarish prophesy be fulfilled, and I found myself strapped into a seat on a wrecked aircraft, my flesh burning away like so much chargrilled chicken, I could simply grasp the knife firmly, then plunge it through my eye socket, directly into my brain – which hopefully would kill me instantly and with the minimum of suffering.

Of course, knowing my luck, it wouldn't kill me at all – it'd just lead to violent convulsions instead. While on fire. Or worse – perhaps the fire brigade would arrive and put out the flames just as I stuck the knife in, leaving me to go through life as a hideously deformed burns victim with a piece of airline cutlery lodged permanently in his eye.

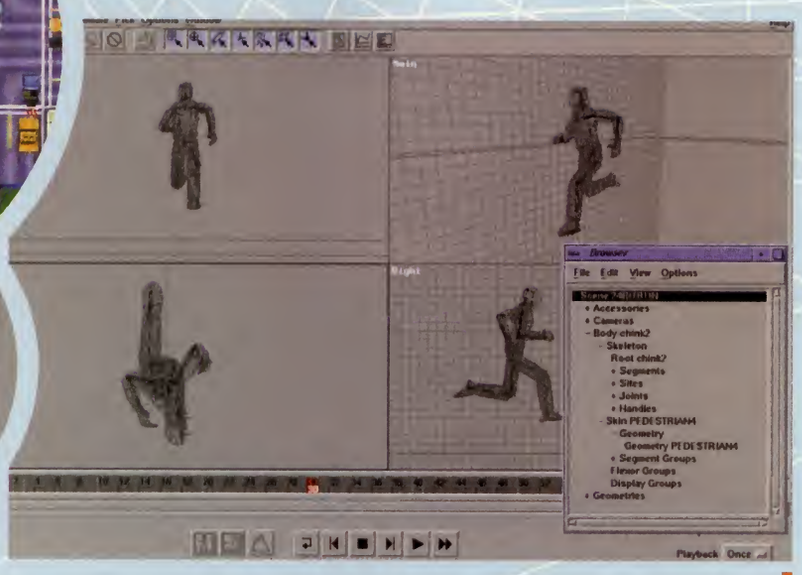
"What's all this got to do with DMA Design?" I hear you ask. Well... nothing, really. Just thought I'd mention it. If nothing else, it makes a change from simply introducing them as the people who brought you *Lemmings*.

Oh shit, more Lemmings?

No wait, come back. This isn't a piece about yet another sequel to the classic strategic save 'em up, but something more tasty altogether: namely *Grand Theft Auto* and *Tanktics*. The former is a refreshingly amoral exercise in top-down car-wrecking, crime-waving hilarity, the latter a genuinely innovative take on the increasingly crowded real-time strategy genre. Both of them look ultra smart with a capital 'S'. So, which one are we going to look at first...? Hmmm... eeeny, meeny, miny...

Mo

One look at *Grand Theft Auto* and you'll probably think the same thing I did: it's a bit like a modern day re-write of *Spy Hunter* (with 24-bit colour graphics and a neat-as-dammit engine that zooms in and out to frame the action). And, like me, you'd be totally wrong. Unless you figured it was a bit like *Micro Machines* instead, in which case you were even further out, tosser. No, *Grand Theft Auto* (or *GTA*, as they call it) actually has more in common with an ancient Spectrum game called *Turbo Esprit* (anyone remember that?), in which you had to race around a fully 'working' city, tracking down drug dealers and bringing them to justice. It was a great game – indeed, Project Leader Keith Hamilton says it's one of his all-time favourites – and shades of it are certainly present



GTA's main character, although really teeny in the game itself, has been lovingly rendered in full 3D. To the left is a test render, probably named 'explosion in a paint factory', or something. No detail has been spared, as you can see.

(Above) *Grand Theft Auto*: an orgy of joyriding, murder and drug-dealing.

in *GTA*, with one major exception. This time around, you're on the wrong side of the law.

The basic concept behind *GTA* is that the player takes the role of a young ne'er-do-well who's trying to join an urban crime syndicate. Like any boy's club worth its salt, membership is restricted to those who take part in an altogether dicey initiation ceremony – in this case committing crimes to order for the big boss man. Unusually for a 'mere' computer game, there are no punches pulled. Here's Brian Baglow, DMA's resident writer-cum-PR-bloke, describing a typical assignment: "In Miami there's a couple of gangs importing drugs. So you just go down the docks while they're getting their delivery and blow them all away. Then you steal the shipment and take it across town to get it cut. And then you've got to deliver it all. While you're doing that you'll find there's a couple of dealers muscling in on your patch, so you have to take them out too." *Sonic The Hedgehog* this ain't.

Morals, shmorals

By the way, you start each level on foot. If you want a set of wheels, you're going to have to take them by force. Pick a car, any car – then break in and steal it. If it's being driven at the time, that's no problem: just wrench the door open and hurl the hapless driver to the tarmac. Get bored of the vehicle you're in and you can simply steal another one – and there are plenty of different types to choose from. The keyword here is 'freedom'.

You're free to drive wherever you choose in the city, to kill whoever you want. Fancy mowing down a couple of pedestrians en route? No problem: which weapon would Sir like to use? (There's a choice ranging from lo-fi bare knuckles, to hi-fi rocket launchers.) Furthermore, the team are determined to make the *GTA* locations behave like a genuine city – a 'live' environment which reacts to whatever incidents are taking place. Smash a car up and before long, a tow-truck will appear to drag it away. Ambulances ferry the dead and the dying to hospital. More significantly, the vigour with which the police pursue you is dependent on your current criminal status – if you're seen as a deadly threat, the boys in blue are likely to start shooting on sight. Still, you can always start firing back. And in *GTA*, policemen are worth more points than Regular Joes.

As if all this flagrant law-breaking, murder and senseless mayhem wasn't already enough to send the self-appointed moral guardians of the nation apocalyptic, *GTA's* soundtrack is also going to feature a slew of four-letter words...

Brian explains: "When you're being chased by a policeman you're going to hear lines like, 'Hey, asshole!' and, 'Freeze, motherf*****r!' Swearing in computer games? Yes, absolutely! I mean, the game's beyond redemption anyway, so we might as well jump in with both feet."

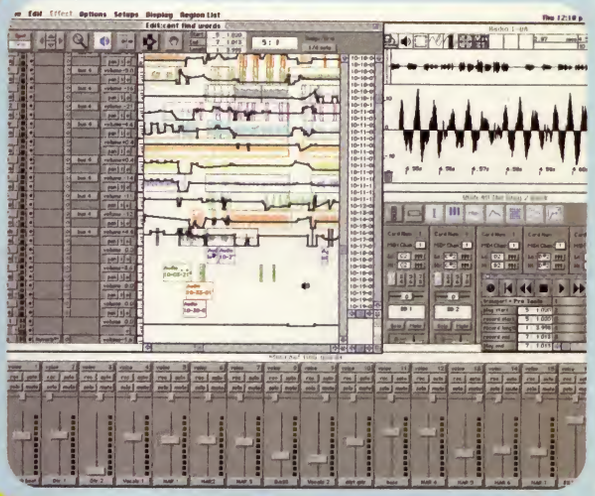
How about having *So What?* by the Anti-Nowhere League playing over the title screen?

"One of my favourites!" chirps Brian. "Have you heard the Metallica cover version? Wow!"

GTA is currently undergoing strenuous playtesting and fiddly tweaking, but all the signs suggest that it's one to look out for – if only for the content alone.

Radio Ga Ga

Another aspect of *GTA* that's worth a mention is the high-quality soundtrack – and in particular, the ingenious way it's played. Throughout the game, the player will find himself sitting behind the wheel of all manner of different vehicles – from sportscars to schoolbuses – and each vehicle has a choice of radio stations playing on the in-car stereo. The styles of music differ wildly; steal a pick-up truck and you might find yourself listening to some godawful country and western, while the next car you pinch might be tuned to an ear-hammering techno station (there's even police radio chatter playing in the cop cars). All conceivable tastes from rap to rock and back again are catered for – and the overall quality of the music (which has been recorded in-house) is superb. There are even plans afoot to release one of the dance tracks as a bona fide single in its own right. Watch this space.



You can't beat a tank

Now, that little game of 'eeny meeny miny mo' I played earlier on was a bit of a con to be honest. I was deliberately putting off any attempt at describing what *Tanktics* is all about. At heart, it's a real-time strategy game – except there's a lot more to it than that. The revolutionary interface for one. Looks a bit like *Gene Wars* or an isometric *Red Alert*, doesn't it? Well in some ways it is, but... Here, tell you what: have a glance at one of the screenshots. See if you can spot the mouse pointer, I bet you can't. Go on. I challenge you.

Interrupting lunch for a picture of their ugly mugs: the DMA Tanktics team on a sunny day in Dundee (from left to right): Russell Elliot (programmer), Craig Stewart (programmer), Aaron Garbut (artist), Tom Kane (project leader), George Harris (programmer), Ken Fee (lead artist), Steve Hodgson (artist), Andy Scott (programmer) and Andy White (programmer). "Hurry up, we're bloody starving!" they're thinking.

"Swearing? Yes, absolutely! GTA is beyond redemption, so we might as well jump in with both feet."

Product details

Developer: DMA Design
Publisher: BMG Interactive
Website: www.dma.co.uk
Release Date: May

Underhand tactics from the stone-age tank – using fat flightless birds as protective armour. The rotter.

▶ Have a good look and then read the next paragraph when you've given up, okay?

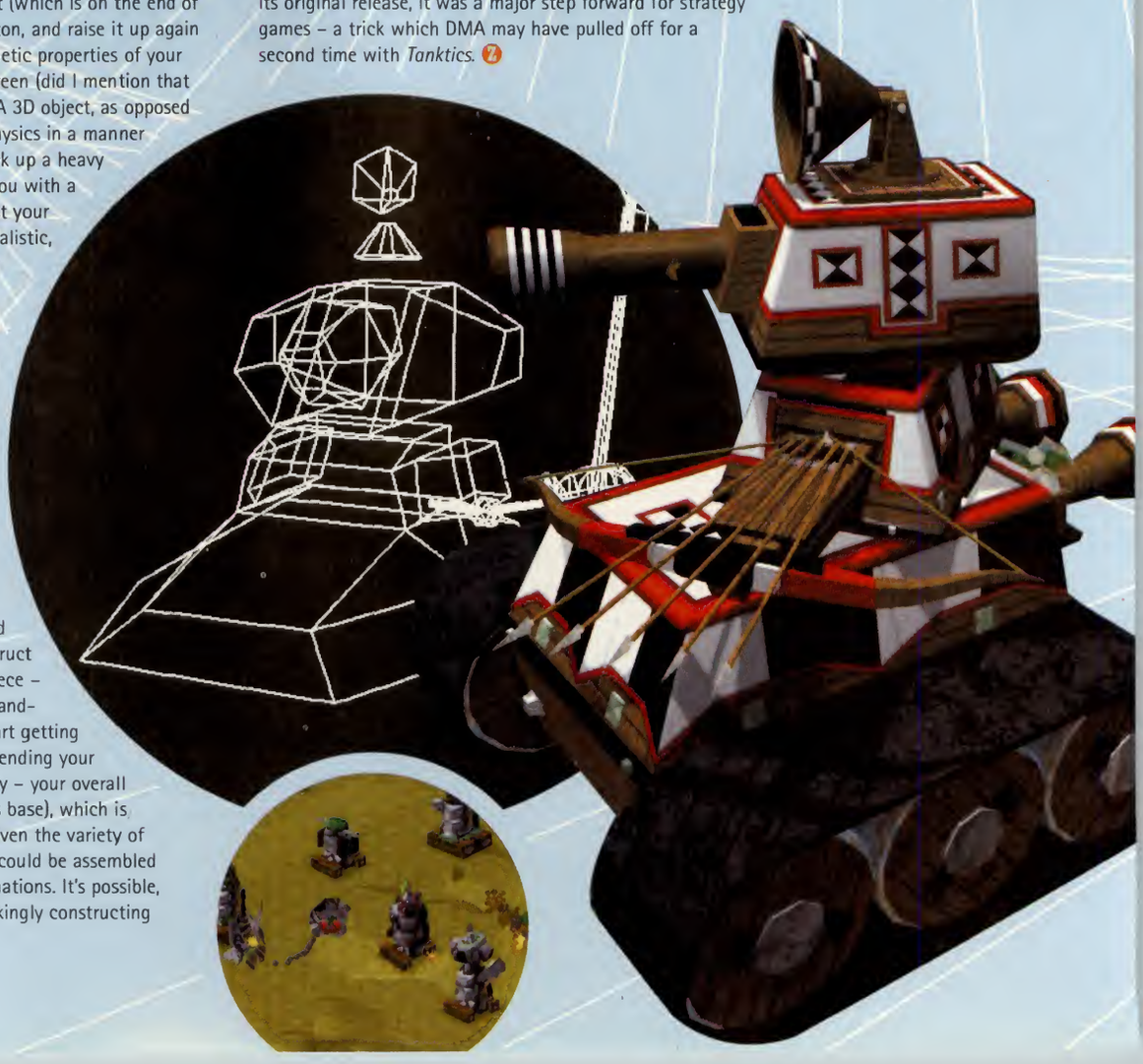
Well? Did you find it? You should have, because it's huge. See that large object with the chain dangling from it? In some of the shots it's a dragon or Pterodactyl; in others it's a UFO or helicopter. That's your 'pointer'. You steer around with the mouse, lower your magnet (which is on the end of the chain) with the left mouse button, and raise it up again with the right. The chain, the magnetic properties of your 'grabber', and every item on the screen (did I mention that everything you see is a proper SVGA 3D object, as opposed to a sprite?) all obey the laws of physics in a manner so realistic, it's downright eerie. Pick up a heavy object and it swings about below you with a sluggish momentum, pulling against your craft as you move around. It's so realistic, you feel as if there really is a bulky object hanging from the mouse – I'm buggered if I can explain how it works, but work it certainly does. It's also your only means of manufacturing tanks. Confused? So am I.

Here's the deal: assuming you've got the resource management side of things sussed out (which involves chucking sheep into a gigantic sort of mincing machine – don't ask), tank parts will fly out of your Part-O-Matic™ machine. You'll need to grab them one by one and construct an entire fleet of tanks, piece by piece – using the aforementioned magnet-and-chain device. Only then can you start getting into the tactical side of things (ie sending your forces into battle against the enemy – your overall aim being to steal the flag from his base), which is where the game really opens up. Given the variety of disparate parts on offer, each tank could be assembled in any one of over a million combinations. It's possible, for example, to spend ages painstakingly constructing a fearsome, towering Death Tank from Hell, in which every weapon you can think of is bolted together, teetering atop a set of tracks – only to sit back and watch, crestfallen, as your enemy runs rings around you with a fleet of tiny, weapon-free (but extremely nippy) tanks, nicking your flag effortlessly in the process. Oh, God, are you still following this?

I'm babbling like a lunatic...

I'm sorry. I can barely make sense of all this stuff myself. Of all the games I've ever seen, *Tanktics* is one of the hardest to describe (it's even trickier to explain than *Baku Baku Animal*, and that's saying something). Think of it as a kind of hi-tech cross between *Command & Conquer*, a game of conkers, and one of those 'steady hand' games (the ones made from a bit of bent wire with a small current running through it) that you find at village fetes and the like. Rest assured, it all looks superb – the 3D objects are incredibly solid in appearance, the physics seems spot-on throughout, and the engine's so smooth it makes you want to burst into tears. You'll simply have to take my word for it until you can get your hands on a demo version – it really does need 'hands-on' experience. We predict a very rosy future for *Tanktics*, very rosy indeed (our own Mallo picked it as his 'Tip for the Top' for 1997). Whatever your views on the seemingly endless range of *Lemmings* spin-offs, there's no denying that at the time of its original release, it was a major step forward for strategy games – a trick which DMA may have pulled off for a second time with *Tanktics*.

(Top) On 'Medieval' levels, your 'pointer' is a dragon. In 'Sci-fi' times (above) it's a shiny chrome-plated UFO which reflects its surroundings.



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OUTLAWS

At times like this you really need a poncho or at least the score and lyrics from *Oklahama*...

Finally, we have conclusive proof that smoking is really bad for your health.

Patrick McCarthy regularly wears a poncho to work. Who better to look at *Outlaws*, the new spaghetti Western game from LucasArts? *(Who have you got? – Ed.)*

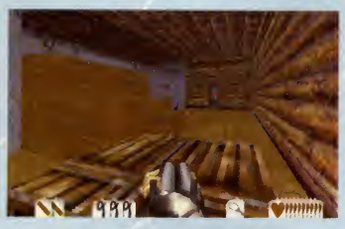
WELCOME TO THE WILD WEST. NO, THAT'S not Hammersmith. (© The Two Ronnies, 1972.) The real Wild West. You know, that place where black-clad baddies get involved in elaborate plots to take over tiny little towns, largely because they've always wanted a High Street of their own to gallop up and down, shooting wildly into the sky and dragging small furry animals on bits of string behind their horses. That place where women who have stupendous décolletages and hairstyles, and make-up one hundred years ahead of their time, walk about with their heads down, because if they look up, a leering cowboy with a grubby moustache will strip the gingham from their corseted body with his eyes. (He's probably trying to work out if this is another one of those good, God fearing 19th century farmer's wives who have a bikini-formed year-round tan.) The Wild West is the sort of place where farmers and the cowhands should be friends – because alright, one man likes to push a plough, the other likes to chase a cow, but that's no reason why they can't be friends. (Unless it's the farmer's cow, and he wants to keep his stock 100 per cent bovine, rather than have weird half-man, half-cow creatures wandering about on his land, frightening everybody.) It's that place, anyway.

But let's talk about you...

You are Chris Anderson – the lanky, black-clad sheriff with a fondness for red-eye and a... Oh no, hang on, he's a *PC Zone* bod. Start again. You are James Anderson – the lanky, black-clad ex-sheriff with no noticeable fondness for red-eye whatsoever. You look like a young Henry Fonda after six years in a concentration camp, and you seem to be wearing a false George Washington beard. You have one of those sexy wives that all ugly lawmen seem to get in Westerns, just so that it seems worse when they get killed by the marauding baddies. (Let's face it, if she looked like a pig in a dress, who'd care?) You also have a young daughter to be proud of – I say proud, because after all those years of bouncing around in a saddle, you're lucky to be able to reproduce at all.

You're an ex-lawman because you took it on yourself to shoot a lawbreaker before he could be hanged. Apparently, the authorities seemed to have taken this amiss, so you resigned from the job rather than bow to the unnecessary

That evil bandit is trying to use the old hide-behind-the-sofa trick.



(Above) Look out, it's a Gatling gun! (Above right) Or is this a Gatling Gun?

Product details

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Website: www.lucasarts.com
Release date: April/May

Take a look at those sideys – kill him! Just kill him right now!

constraints you felt the interfering bureaucrats were placing upon you. You live in a small homestead, which happens to be in the way of someone's plans for a railroad.

Inevitably, you go to town to buy supplies one day, and return to find your homestead in ruins, your sexy wife just about to pop her clogs, and your child kidnapped by a lunatic in a dentist's smock. Off you go to shoot the shit out of the several hundred unwashed desperadoes responsible for this act of malfeasance. Like all true gunfighters, while the death of your sexy wife registers as something of an annoyance, you seem relieved to be back in the swing of things.

A fistful of references...

Basically, *Outlaws* is a first-person viewed action adventure. It's based on a revamped *Dark Forces* 3D engine, and uses *Full Throttle*, cartoon-style graphics. This might not sound like such a good idea at first: after all, the *Quake* engine has set a standard in games of this type. But, having played a few levels, it looks like it might be a laugh. They've gone all-out for the 'Spaghetti Western' look by using every imaginable cliché, from the title sequence onwards.

Blow each other away with Colt 45s, smoking cigars and cracking whips.

Co-designers Stephen Shaw and Daron Stinnett are self-confessed Sergio Leone fans, and *Outlaws* is very atmospheric as a result. The towns are detailed and they all have secret areas. There's a sequence on a moving train. And everywhere is crawling with outlaws. There are a number of weapons – your six-shooter is backed up by a Winchester carbine and, as you work your way around the levels, you'll find more and better weapons. There's a shotgun, a knife (which you throw, rather coolly) and even sticks of dynamite. Naturally, you light these with your cigar.

The controls are infinitely customisable, so you can look up and down, *Quake*-style, duck behind objects and crawl about in cover, popping up to shoot people. The adventure element consists mostly of exploring to find objects which allow you access to the next area – but there are no major puzzles, as such. There is a plot, however, which unfolds in the form of cut-scenes as you progress. There'll also be 'historical missions' for you to play – whatever they are. Let's hope there's a bit of wagon-circling involved.

Fans of carnage will be disappointed to know that you can't shoot the horses which stand about in some levels. This would be unthinkable in America, where shooting a horse would be like shooting a cow in India, or shooting the Queen Mother here. (Now there's an idea for a game...) Anyway, you can shoot the chickens – which seems a bit 'beakist' to me – and with the network options you can shoot each other. You can pick one of the 12 villains in the game, and sneak about in the sunshine blowing each other away with Colt 45s, whistling, smoking cigars and cracking whips. Should be a laugh.

The soundtrack

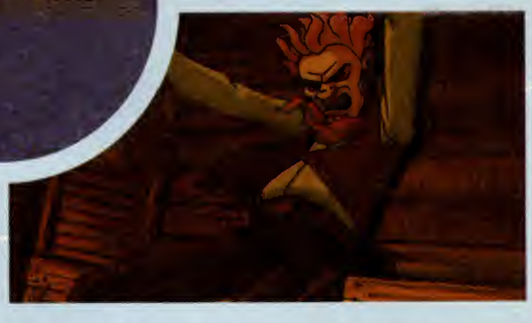
The music and effects that pootle along behind the action are inspiring stuff. Everything you could hope for in a 'spaghetti' Western is there. The music varies between dramatic crescendos that sound like a fist fight has broken out in the wind section of the Amarillo Symphony Orchestra, through to little fancy bits on guitars and trumpets, and a full-blown workout by the kind of Mexican band who wander about in puffed-sleeve shirts and bellbottoms in the background of Randolph Scott movies.

There are tunes which are so close to those from actual Sergio Leone films that you feel you can whistle along with them. It's all heart-warming stuff, and injects new vigour into your back-shooting of unshaven rednecks. Best of all are the one-off flourishes: a rattlesnake noise when you pick up some ammo; a deep-throated "Hunh!" – there's even whistling in the accepted 'someone's-just-had-their-belly-aerated' manner. About the only thing that's missing seems to be the 'open pocketwatch' music popular with those gold-toothed, arch-enemy-of-Lee Van Cleef types.

Taunting

As you pick your way through the various cactus-dotted, dust-filled shitholes that these scumbag Wild West kidnappers inhabit (no, not student bedrooms), you'll be subjected to considerable amounts of taunting. Wild West villains are known for a rumbustious sense of humour, and for shouting stupid things just before they cop a bullet between the eyes.

It's all fairly traditional stuff. How often have you heard the baddies taunting Clint, as he makes his way through a town, picking them off one by one? There are numerous shouts of "Where aaaare you Maw-shall?", "Give up Mawshall... yer surrounded!" and "Ooh, look at the state of your clothes! Why don't you wear a poncho like the other gangly lawmen do, you big thing?"



(Top) Mrs Anderson gets hers... (Centre) These Wild West towns look positively picturesque at night. (Bottom) Now that guy can dance.

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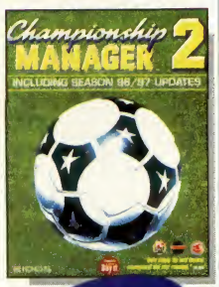

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PREMIER MANAGER 97

(Above) Watching the highlights and seeing your players perform makes the game instantly addictive.

Just like Harry Rednapp, Gremlin have looked abroad to bring them footballing fame and fortune. Their new signing is a Spaniard of great pedigree and much promise, but how will 'he' adapt to the pressures of the English Premier League? Jeremy Wells gets out his Spanish dictionary and suntan lotion...

THE PREMIER MANAGER SERIES HAS SOLD over a million copies, and the previous version, Premier Manager 3, managed to ensconce itself within the gaming charts for almost two years. Good form for a PC game you might think, but footie management games tend to reach the parts that other games cannot reach.

Potential six-figure unit sales and the current international love affair with anything football has meant that almost every games publisher in the world has jumped aboard the bandwagon. There are now more footie management games on the shelves, or due for release, than ever before.

So far, it's been a two-horse race between Domark's *Championship Manager* series (now published by EIDOS Interactive) and Gremlin's *Premier Manager*. Few people play both games (let's face it, you'd have to stay up 24 hours a day to really do it properly) and each camp is fiercely loyal to its chosen brand. God knows why – let's just suppose that "it's a football thing".

In the past, *Premier Manager* has been criticised (mostly by *CM2* fans) for being too obsessed with hot-dog sales, ground improvement and finance management to be realistic and therefore enjoyable. Managing tactics, team selection and transfers were what's important (they said) – not working out how much to charge for programmes. That should be left to someone else entirely (preferably of Germanic origin) who enjoyed balancing spreadsheets and tweaking figures. That was not a manager's job (as Ruud Gullit would no doubt agree), that was a business management simulation.

However, as most *Premier Manager* addicts would point out immediately, when you're managing a team locked in the lower leagues, and fighting for survival, every programme sold is another pound in your club's kitty. If you can convince fans to have mustard on their hot dog and charge them five pence extra – you're onto a bit of a winner. Next week they might have tomato ketchup and mustard! That little extra cash extracted from the fans could mean the difference between another season of football and going under. Just ask the manager of Sudbury Town FC. That was what real grass-roots football was all about.

All things to all fans

With this in mind, Gremlin got together with Spanish developers Dynamic Software (see panel on page 67) in an attempt to produce the 'definitive' management game. A game that would appeal to both sets of fans, and bring them together in one big football love-in – just like last summer, during Euro 96, when Liverpool fans hugged Everton fans and Arsenal fans joked with Spurs fans about how Darren Anderton got into the side on merit and not because Terry Venables has a thing about Tottenham players. Together they would create a game that would remain on the hard drives of those who loved to bury themselves in the profit-making schemes of running a football club, and those whose favourite sensation was the tingling feeling in their toes when the schoolboy they'd picked up on a free at the start of the season was in fact a goal-machine of even more promise than Ronaldo.

The new approach might even tempt those who had been put off football management games with its attractive and ▶

(Above) As well as set tactics, you'll be able to formulate your own style of play through training and customisation. The easy-on-the eye menus make changing stuff easy.

accessible menu systems and dazzle them with its polished databases and array of customisable options. Who knows?

Suits you sir...

So how are they going about it? How can they possibly keep everyone happy? Well, they're giving the player the option to get as involved in the different aspects of club management as they want. You'll be able to play *Premier Manager 97* in three different ways. Players interested only in team affairs (team selection, tactics and the transfer market) will be able to play the game without having to worry about the business side because this will be automatically be overseen by an Assistant Manager.

More ambitious players can opt to take charge of all aspects of running a football club. They'll be able to hire and fire all the vital members of staff (including the groundsmen and the club psychologist), direct training staff to coach the squad (and even certain players) in any discipline (tackling, heading, passing etc) and participate in the varied financial affairs of the club. There's even an option (presumably included to satisfy the German market) to ignore all the football stuff and concentrate on the business side.

The rub is that you'll be able to play the game in whatever fashion you want. Obviously, you'll do better if you opt to do everything yourself (if you know what you're doing), but you won't be penalised for leaving certain things in the capable hands of your Assistant Manager (bless him).

The nitty gritty

Any football management game is only as good as its stats and Gremlin have made every effort to make *PM97* as accurate as possible. Each player will have 12 basic stats rated from zero to 99. These can move up and down as they age and with training. Unlike *CM2*, there are no hidden ratings – "what you see is what you get" – and players will have an average rating out of 100 to indicate form as the season progresses. The player stats for the game have been compiled by Spanish journalists and experts (see Database box), and there's talk of bringing in "a leading TV football personality" to give the game extra authority.

Managers will be able to choose from a selection of ten pre-defined formations that are fully customisable and use a zonal system to define where players will operate. You will also be able to dictate and tweak tactics using slide bars to concentrate on various areas of the pitch (defence, midfield and attack) and initiate certain styles of play (passing game, long ball, counter attack and so on). There's also an option to adjust the level of tackling and you can even 'man mark' certain players. Overall, it's pretty comprehensive, but you won't be able to select who takes set pieces and who wears the captain's arm band.

If you want to get the best from your players you'll have to initiate a comprehensive training schedule. This is done by hiring certain 'experts' who are proficient in certain skills (tackling, heading, dribbling etc). The more expensive the coach, the more players he can train at once and the better your players will become. Not all of the players will respond to training and it will be discipline specific, rather than position specific, so don't expect to have a team that consists of 22 fully-rounded players in a couple of days – the process will take time.

There's not much point in training a defender to dribble and pass if you're going to opt for long ball tactics, so your training plan will largely be dictated by your tactics and vice versa – and of course your wallet. Thankfully, you'll be able to compare players' stats before and after a period of training to see if they've responded so you don't continue to throw good money after bad. If things don't go to plan or you're plagued with injuries you'll be able to play players out of position, but this will effect their ratings and performance.

If it all sounds a little daunting, then you can tell your Assistant Manager to sort out a general training programme to keep your squad in reasonable shape and maintain their

"Players are either good players, or they aren't. It's as simple as that. Their form may dip, but you pays your money and takes your choice."

The Database of Football, Futbol

Ever wanted to dig up all the goss on Tony Adams? Do you want to know more about why Howard Kendall's car was said to be "stuck in first gear"? Well now it's possible for you to do just that, using the massive *Premier Manager 97* player database.

Compiled by uber-stat man Pablo Arranda, it's a comprehensive database of hundreds of players, complete with cheesy photos. Not only is it full of career details, transfers and player history, but it also contains useful 'anecdotes', which are carefully compiled to ensure that no player's darkest secrets remains unknown. You can even update it as the season progresses and keep your very own files on the players and clubs you love and hate.

Everyone who interviewed Pablo tried their very hardest to catch him out (without wishing to damage international relations, of course) but nobody managed it. It's official, this man knows more about European football than anyone else on the entire planet.

The game will give the player unrivalled control of team tactics and training, and you'll even be able to train your squad to play a certain way. As with every other part of the game, the menu screens are attractive and well laid out.

Product details

Developer: Dynamic Software
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Release Date: May
Website: gremlininteractive.co.uk

skills to a general level. It's infinitely more satisfying to take this on yourself, not to mention more cost effective and rewarding, but the option to pass is there if you want it.

Transfers and stickers

The transfer system may seem a little odd to those unfamiliar with *Premier Manager*. You hire scouts to look for players for you (you dictate the kind of player you're after by position and skill) and a few weeks later they have a shortlist that you check and then make enquiries. The more expensive the scout, the more detailed his research and accurate his judgement. Or you can just click on any team and make a bid for a player directly – the database helps you if you're unsure of a player's history and form, but if you employ a decent scout you'll get a decent player – "Players are either good players, or they aren't," admits UK Product Manager Tony Casson. "It's as simple as that. Their form may dip, but you pays your money and takes your choice."

Ultimately, the transfer system is not as comprehensive or random as in other games, and may even be considered to be a bit too restrictive, but on the plus side it's easy to use.

As for the business side of things, you can opt to have total control of all things finance and mess around with the spreadsheets. The obvious agenda is to follow the Man Utd model and make lots of cash and at the same type be successful at every level. This means making as much money as you can for the club so you can start strengthening the squad and developing the ground at the end of every season to make more money. To stop managers of fledgling clubs topping themselves, the game isn't too hard. "It's not totally realistic, or it would be too depressing. Miracles can happen in this game – it is after all a game," grins Tony, "otherwise it wouldn't be worth managing teams in the lower leagues. You've gotta have a dream and make it seem possible."

There won't be an option to manage a national side, you'll just have to be happy with conquering Europe at club level.

Looking good

If there's one thing that makes *PM97* stand out from the rest, it's the way it looks. All the menus, tables and screens are excellent, and it's a joy to watch the match highlights and see which players are performing. The fact that it's backed up with player match stats and a match commentary from Barry Davies makes it even better. He's recorded lines that'll keep you chuckling, but Coventry City fans might be disgruntled to hear that Barry refused to say: "This year's Championship Winners are Coventry City", because, according to the man himself, "It would never happen."

Maybe not everyone will fall in love with *PM97*, but it will keep fans happy, and may convert a few of the opposition.

(Above) Being able to see your players perform adds an extra dimension of excitement (ahem).

Quienes son Dynamic Software?

Dynamic Software are based in Madrid. They've worked on a number of projects, but their biggest success is undoubtedly a football management sim called *Futbol 5.0*. As you may have deduced, it's the fifth version of the game, and to say it's popular *en Espanol* is something of an understatement – in fact, the latest version has sold 300,000 copies.

They're all completely mad about football, and they know more about the English league than Des Lynam and that bloke down the pub put together, and they are understandably very excited about conquering the rest of Europe with Gremlin.

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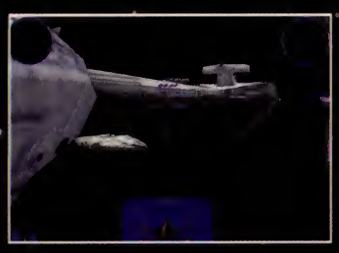
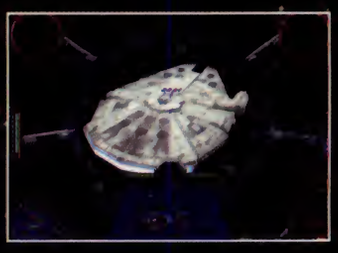
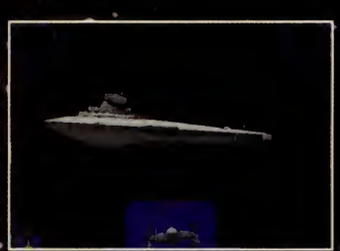




(Mick the mechanic.)

ENGINE IS PHENOMENAL. THE NEW MISSIONS ARE MASTERSTROKES OF SPACE MAYHEM. THERE'S EVEN SINGLE PLAYER CAMPAIGNS FOR AN ALL-NEW EXPLOSIVE EXPERIENCE. NO WONDER PC GAMER PROCLAIMS THAT "LUCASARTS IS NOW GRANTING THE WISHES OF MILLIONS WITH X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER". AND IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THEM, JUST ASK MICK! **http://www.lucasarts.com**



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HARDWAR

We asked Chris Anderson to check out Gremlin's forthcoming *Elite*-style flight sim. He was suitably impressed, to say the least.

Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Website: http://www.gremlin.com
Release Date: Late April

(Left) All the buildings in the game are highly detailed. Just like this one in fact.

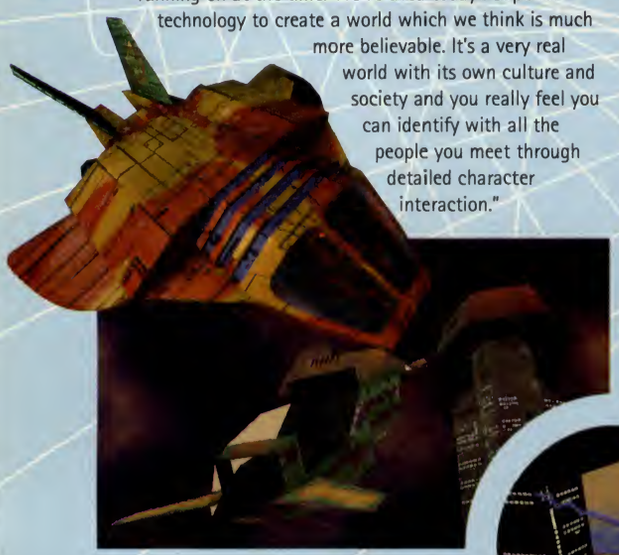
ELITE HAS GOT TO GO DOWN IN COMPUTER game history as one of the all-time greats. Despite many attempts by publishers to rip off the old classic, it still stands head and shoulders above the competition as the best space exploration game for any computer or console. It obviously comes as no surprise then to hear that Gremlin have decided to have a go at the genre themselves with a game that has many similarities to Elite, almost to the point where it's getting too close for comfort. However, in this case at least, first impressions are definitely deceptive. Yes the game does look pretty similar to Elite at first glance, and it's based on the same idea of exploring a known area of space in the guise of a sort of 'Lone Ranger in space' but hey, be patient, give the game half a chance and you'll soon discover it has many hidden depths as you learn to decipher your role.

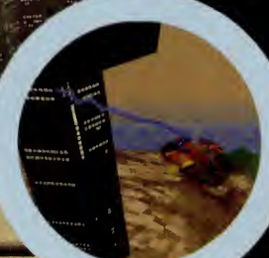
I had an interesting conversation with Joe Chetcuti from Gremlin who's been working on the game for some time and challenged him to explain exactly why *Hardwar* shouldn't be dismissed as just another *Elite* clone. "The basic concept of *Hardwar* is similar to that in *Elite*, but we like to think that we've taken the idea a lot further," says Joe. "In terms of character interaction, *Elite* was fairly cold and clinical. This was obviously due to the limitations of the machine it was running on at the time. We've used today's superior technology to create a world which we think is much more believable. It's a very real world with its own culture and society and you really feel you can identify with all the people you meet through detailed character interaction."

What's the aim of the game?

Well, that makes sense I suppose, but the one drag about *Elite* was the fact that there was no real aim to the game. The storyline, objective and the whole game feel lacked direction. According to Joe, *Hardwar* addresses this problem with ease and panache: "Yes, we agree that although most people will be happy just to explore the gameworld there will be others who want an overall objective. To this end the ultimate objective of the game is to escape from Titan, the world the game is set in. The player will get hints at how to go about this as he progresses through the game. However, if the player just wants to roam around the environment completing whatever missions he comes across then he can."

Just for the record I've had a preview of the game and it's gorgeous. I'd like to announce right here and now that it looks right up my street and I hereby 'bagsy' the right to review it when it comes in. *Hardwar* in-depth review next month.





(Above) Fly underground in tunnels like this one to avoid detection.
(Left) The cockpit view. Looks lovely, non?

This is a city with a secret. The children that used to crowd its streets are vanishing one by one, and no one knows where or why they've gone.

Perhaps Miette, a streetwise kid with a knack for petty theft could be the one with the skill and cunning to solve the mystery.

But can a child survive in such a strange and fantastical city, full of dangerous characters? Is she up to such a bizarre mission?

Or, more to the point, are you?

The City of Lost Children

PC CD ROM

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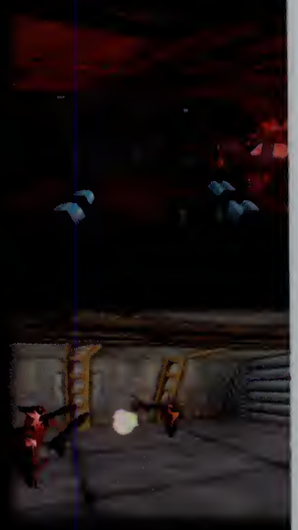
TERRACIDE



The colonists are returning home
Mutated by the harsh winds and
extreme temperatures of their
adopted planets, they have no lov
for the humans who forgot
them centuries ago.
They're coming home to their birthri
Only a single, one man
ship could hope to slip
through their scanners and infiltra
their craft to destroy them from wit
That craft is yours.

FAILURE MEANS TERRA

- "MY TONGUE NEARLY JUMPED OUT OF MY MOUTH AND MADE A PERMANENT HOME ON THE MONITOR" ***PC ZONE***

"...TERRACIDE, A GAME WHICH PROMISES TO BRING NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN VISUALS TO THE PC FORMAT" ***THE EDGE***

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688i HUNTER KILLER

Duncan MacDonald knew that *Friday The 13th* was filmed in Connecticut and swore he'd never go near the place because, in the film, it was vile and depressing. But then came the offer of a free airline ticket and he began to have second thoughts...

SO THERE WE WERE IN NEW HAVEN, Connecticut – David Wilson, of EA Europe; Tommy, a Californian Journo; Laurent, a French journo; Herman the nightmare German journo and I. Time to collect the hotel keys and check out our rooms, which were all massive and had four poster beds – except mine. I had the 'joke' room; the 'booby prize' room. It was tiny, with a shit telly, and it was freezing cold. What's more, the 1920s convection heater made such a racket, it was obviously going to be unusable when I finally wanted to get to sleep. How everybody (apart from me) laughed!

Friday The 13th, part nine...

You really don't have to visit Connecticut to know what it's like: during the mini-van trip from our hotel to Sonalysts, it honestly was like being in *Friday The 13th*. There were loads of those horrid white wooden houses with spooky porches. You know? And churches! So many bloody churches. It was like one per house, near enough. And there were hardly any people walking about (I presume they were all worshipping the devil in some basement somewhere, eating babies).

Anyway, enough of that, because the drive was over. We were at Sonalysts Inc in Waterford Connecticut, and we were here to see *688i Hunter Killer*. I quickly checked that my little tape recorder was working, and it wasn't. Shit. Pen and paper then. I hate that. What a twat!

Flags!

Sonalysts Inc was a vexillologist's dream; as long as the vexillologist in question was particularly into the Stars and Stripes, that is, because they were bloody everywhere – up flagpoles, on walls, in windows. This, I realised, was a very very serious, very very American establishment. Apple pie. John Wayne. Dude ranch. Old glory. Stormin' Norman. *I Love Lucy*. The National Rifle Association.

"Here's your pass," said the receptionist, breaking into my pinko reverie. I took it and joined the others. We were led past loads of doors that bore the legend 'restricted access', and into a room that looked like the Met Office. Herman the nightmare German stuck his video camera on his giant tripod and placed it where it was in everyone's way – something he'd be doing all day, as it happens.

In case you're interested, we were actually in an office in which the entire world's weather was being analysed, or something. (There were Cray computers in cupboards and what have you, all in contact with satellites.) We were shown loads of on-screen maps, and were zoomed in for a close-ish look at the Himalayas, in real-time. Herman asked one trillion questions, while I made three notes. But anyway, it really was an impressive room, and some of that technology was going into the game.

Do not adjust your set... this is what periscopes do these days, apparently. The ship is split in half so that the... er, oh dear. Um, it's something to do with working out how far away it is or something.

Next...

The tour included visits to the Sonalysts Prop Department (they make props for movies); the Sonalysts Film Studio (they make their own movies to, er, put their own props in); and the Sonalysts Audio Production Suite. Or recording studio, if you prefer. Herman the nightmare German set up his giant video camera and aimed it at a monitor, on which the opening sequence of *688i Hunter Killer* was showing.

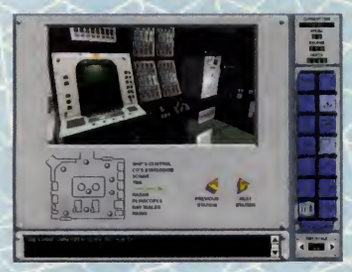
A resident drug-crazed muso talked us through the piece: "A lot of the sounds in the music track are, like, from the real thing, man. We spent like three days at sea recording, well, like everything. Hear that sonar ping, yeah? Real! And that propeller wash? Real!"

"Was that the real sound a torpedo makes when it hits a ship, then?" asked Herman the nightmare German, keenly.

"No," replied the muso. "That was a syn-drum solo." Doh!

Onwards...

Another room, and a demonstration of a genuine submarine radar by a bloke who was quite nervous: maybe he thought we were carefully disguised top brass from the Iraq military or something, who knows? Anyway, the radar was hideously complex and, after about five minutes, Tommy, Laurent and I were gazing around in abject confusion. Not so Herman the nightmare German who, having set up his camera, spat out



(Top) In-game you get to the different sub stations by pointing and clicking, and then you're FMV'd there in a sort of *7th Guest* fashion.

(Top) Recreate the Suez Crisis. Smart, this time round see if we can get a nuclear war going, eh?
(Bottom) I've always said sub sims are slow-motion flight sims, and the external views in *688i* prove I was right.

more questions than a four year old kid at a zoo. I let them all drift over me because I already had all the information I would ever need: the real radar is very complicated, very clever and has several modes – and it would be recreated exactly in the game.

And it was!

I was right. We were now in the programmers' room, looking at the game's radar screen. The bloke demonstrating showed us how to get a fix on a distant ship. Yes, cool. Rather complicated, rather long and drawn-out, but at the same time fascinating. Somehow it was mesmerising.

Then Herman asked what was, in fact, a pretty dumb question: "Why don't you ping them?"

"Because then they, and everyone else in the area, would know where we are," came the curt reply.

Ho ho ho. Even I knew that.

It was then mentioned that the team had looked at every other sub sim on the market before starting to write this one, so I asked what they'd thought of *Fast Attack*: mainly because to me, a layman, it had looked pretty bloody complicated in a vaguely similar fashion, so I assumed, therefore, that it must have been pretty authentic.

Cue a polite snort of derision. "It wasn't a bad attempt," came the guarded reply. Lots of nodding, smiling heads around the room. In other words *Fast Attack* wasn't realistic. Well blow me down.

Product details

Developer: Sonalysts Inc
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Website: www.ea.com
Release date: May

> **"It's a game after all. You gotta make it fun. If you want it realistic, don't use the external views."**

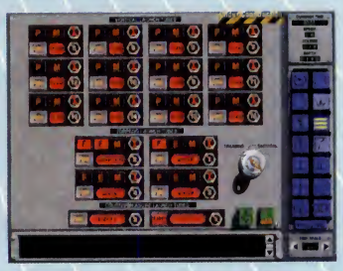
Another viewpoint

As we were walked through an entire mission, we were constantly shown events through external cameras, a point hammered home to us by Terry Jones, the big bad Sonalysts boss, who had finally joined us...

"We talked about this at length," he said. "Should we include external views? We noticed that no other submarine game did, and of course in real life you can't see a darn thing." (Terry used to be a bona fide US Navy Submarine Captain.) "In the end, we thought "What the hell" and went with it. It's a game, after all. You gotta make it fun. And if you want it totally realistic, then just don't use 'em."

More nods. Everybody was nodding. I was nodding too. We all nodded for about a minute. Terry had an air of authority, which means that when he's finished speaking, on whatever subject, you either nod for ages, or simply salute. (Or get hurled in the brig.)

And that, as it happens, was pretty much the end of the day. We'd seen heaps, and it was all mega complicated. The bottom line, though, is as follows: here's a company that makes proper training simulators for the genuine US navy... and now they've made a game. You've just got to say 'Blimey' really, haven't you?



(Middle) A really massive, weirdly-shaped submarine in the process of diving. *(It's a sinking ship, you arsehole – Ed.)*

A brief 'interview' with Terry Jones

A brief 'interview' with Terry Jones, retired Commanding Officer of numerous US Navy submarines...

I was originally intending to make a stupid 'joke' about Terry sharing his name with a Monty Python member, but realised that (a) he probably wouldn't understand what I was talking about, and (b) it wouldn't have been funny anyway, and would have spiralled into an embarrassing disaster. So I decided to open my interview with the obvious question, the one on everyone's lips...

Me: While you were in active service, did you ever launch a torpedo or missile at a real threat?

Terry: Ho ho ho. No!!!

He was looking at me as if to say, "come on, ask another one".

(I don't think he liked my ear-ring.)

So I rephrased the first question...

Me: Okay then, but while you were in active service did you ever find yourself in a stand-off position where you thought 'This is it'? Did you ever find yourself with your finger on the button? Whether you pressed it or not?

Terry: *(Shouting)* You've just transgressed the boundaries of your review brief, MISTER!!!

Jesus! I nearly shat my pants. It was like being court-martialed. Just as well I didn't ask the question about the sailors/ buggery/cook's hairy shoulder blades in the torpedo room.

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replay on mayday

Out Thursday 1st May 1997

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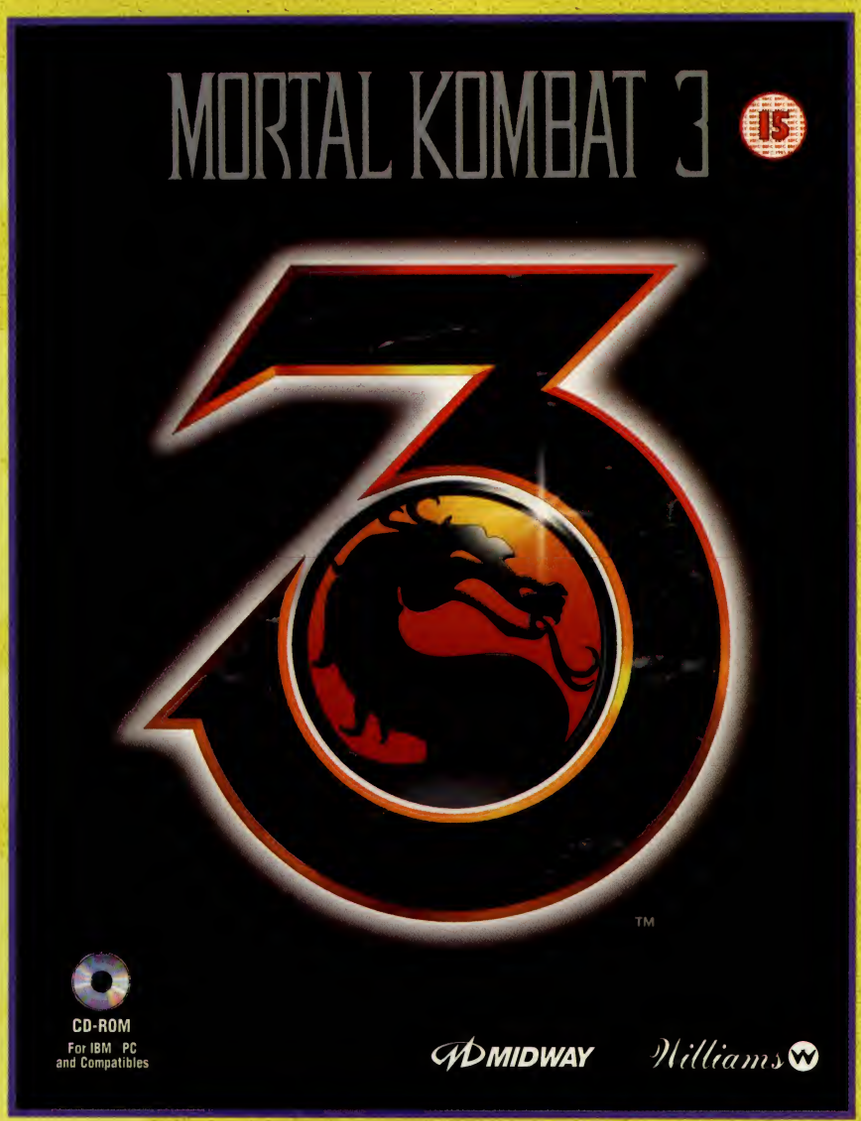

The arcade-smash on PCI 14 immediately playable characters, secret moves, fatalities, characters and combos. The ultimate PC beat 'em up tournament.

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PC CD-ROM

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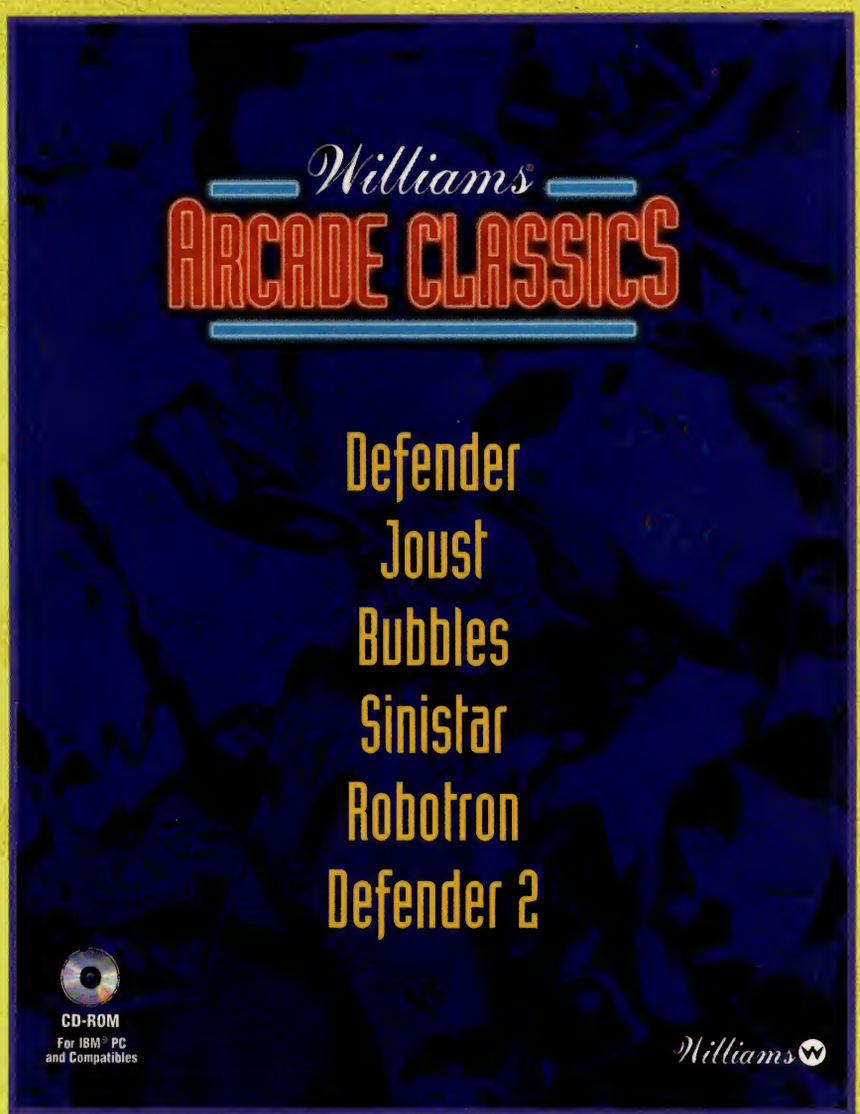

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PC CD-ROM

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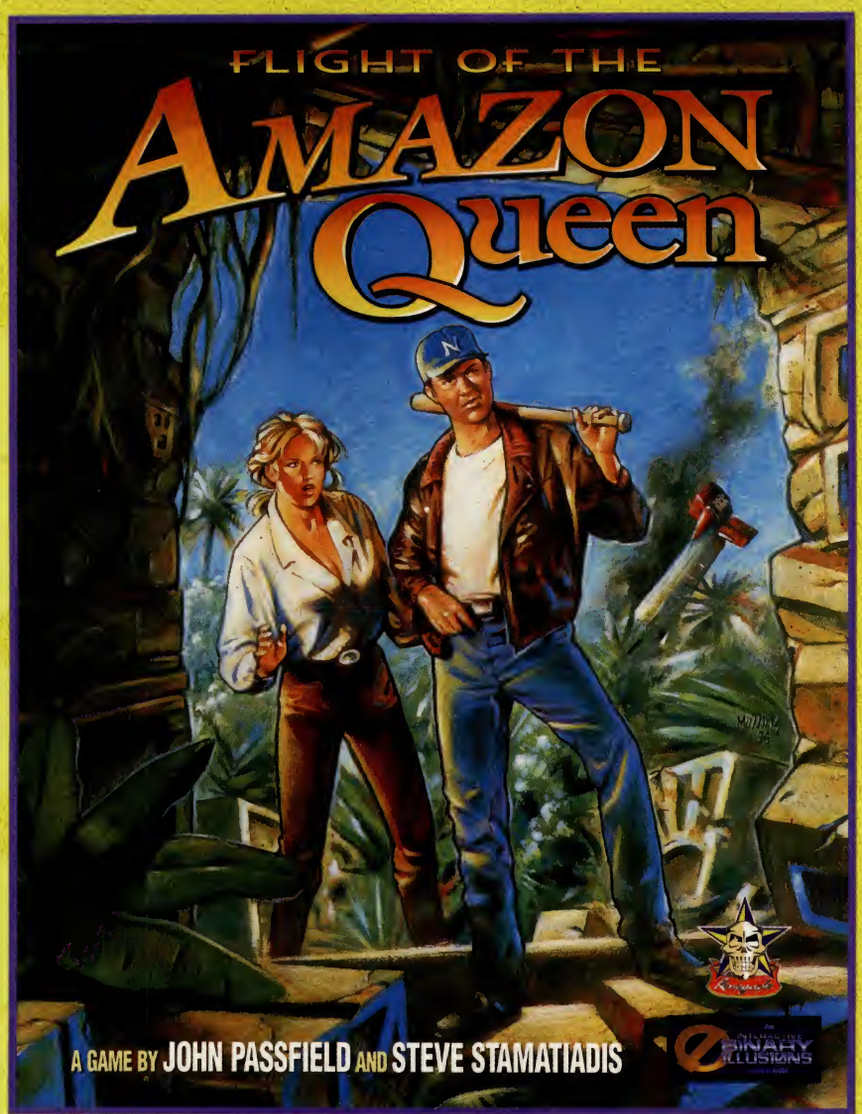

State-of-the-art graphic adventure featuring over 100 different locations, 40 characters, sumptuous design, and CD quality audio.

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Review ZONE

This has been a very special month at *PC Zone*. Apart from completely re-designing the mag from top to bottom (you mean you didn't notice?) we've finally got a game in that everyone loves: *Carmageddon.*

In Perspective

This is designed to be a purely visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

Game 2

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

- Carmageddon
- Theme Hospital
- Quake: Scourge Of Armagon
- Carmageddon
- And errh... Carmageddon

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

- Daytona USA
- Phantasmagoria 2
- Sega Rally
- Super League Pro Rugby
- The Dark Hour (Quake add-on disk)

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Scoring system

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

Reviews index

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(Below) *Carmageddon*, the best driving game ever!

Thanks this issue to

- Brian Baglow @ DMA
- Harriet Sendall @ EA
- Tony Jenkins @ Shoot 'n Surf
- Heather & Tony @ LucasArts
- Woody, Doug & Jim @ VIE
- Morven Sloane @ Sony
- Pete Hawley @ GT Interactive

- Goodbye & Good Luck to Nic @ EA Sports

Awards

90+ CLASSIC
The highest accolade a game can attain. It's innovative, extremely playable and has masses of long-term appeal. If you're going to buy a game this month, it should be this.

80–89 RECOMMENDED
An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something to make it a gaming classic. Well worth checking out, especially if you're a big fan of the genre.

20 and below PANTS
Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. Do not buy this game, it will ruin your life and all those who come into contact with you. Got It? Have we made ourselves clear?

Looking back

Cars, footie and the need for speed

with Jeremy Wells

IT'S NOT OFTEN that a game comes into the office that tempts people from other floors down to the flea-bitten corridor that is the *PC Zone* HQ. It's fair to say that *Carmageddon* is so far proving to be one of the most popular games we've ever had in the office. Maybe it's just that we're all sad sickos down here, but everyone just loves it and it has remained on the hard drives of every machine in the office. Stainless Software should be congratulated on giving gamers what they so obviously want.

The mag seems full of football and driving games at the moment. Although these two genres happen to be my own personal favourites, it hasn't been a conscious decision to fill the magazine with this stuff. There just seem to be an awful lot around at the moment. I blame the PlayStation.

The arrival of *Formula 1* from Psygnosis in the office caused much wooing and gasps. It's the first 'accelerator' only game we've had in for review, and although it's pretty much a direct port of the mega-successful (though latterly criticised) PlayStation game, it's still absolutely stunning and laden with options. As expected, the blistering frame rate has had everyone on the phone to the chaps at 3DfX desperately trying to blag a card for their PC.

Despite numerous promises from developers (see our feature in the March issue) there seems to be very little support in the way of actual games ready for review. With this in mind, our advice to those of you who are thinking of buying a 3D accelerator card, is to hang on a bit longer and wait until developers actually start releasing dedicated software. At the moment Psygnosis seem to be the only company taking the 3D accelerator 'revolution' seriously. *Formula 1* is out now and supports various different cards and Direct3D. *WipeOut 2097* will be out soon, and Psygnosis have promised that there will be some original native 3D accelerator stuff due for release very shortly. Other publishers seem content only to release the odd patch for their back catalogue and leave it at that.

From what we've seen so far, the future is looking bright again for PC gamers, especially now that LucasArts have confirmed that their stunning *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* will take advantage of Direct3D and deliver an unlimited frame rate. Don't know about you, but I can't wait 'til summer.

ATI 3D Native Version Available

3DBLASTER Native Version Available

3DFX Native Version Available

DIAMOND STEALTH Native Version Available

MATROX MYSTIQUE Native Version Available

POWERVR Native Version Available

The software is designed to take advantage of **D3D**

The software is designed to take advantage of **MMX**

The software will only run under **WINDOWS 95**

The game may run slowly, especially in hi-res mode

The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTINPUT**

The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTPLAY**

The software supports Internet play

The software will run acceptably on a **486DX2/66**

THE BENCHMARK PC

At *PC Zone* all games are played and tested on a DAN Technology Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM, a 2Mb graphics card and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive.

Carmageddon

PC ZONE Classic

Imagine everything you ever wanted from a car game, then triple it. Could a game that good ever exist? Er, yes, says Duncan MacDonald, and it's called *Carmageddon*...

DO YOU BY ANY CHANCE REMEMBER Macca's review of Quake, and how it was loads and loads of pages chock-full of sphincter-licky fawning and the like? Well, my Carmageddon review's going to be a bit like that, the only real difference is that I've got three pages rather than a zillion. So, er, I'd better hurry up then, hadn't I?

Carmageddon, to get straight to the point, is one of the best computer games I've ever played; it's certainly the best car game I've ever played, bar none. (And yes, that includes *F1GP2*.) It's so completely fab, in fact, that I'm sort of a wee bit speechless, and don't really know where to start. Give me a moment to collect my thoughts. (Hmm, hmm...)

Kinder surprise

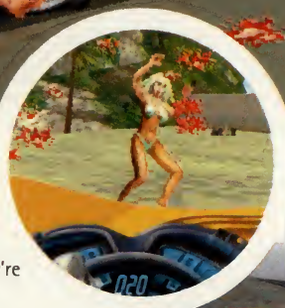
Carmageddon isn't just one driving game, and it isn't even two driving games: it's three driving games. Confused? Let me explain. You see there are three different ways to 'win' a 'race' in *Carmageddon* (the apostrophes are there for good reason, incidentally). First, there's the old-fashioned way where you have to complete a set number of laps. If you don't want to play things in that fashion, however, you have the option of killing all the pedestrians. When they're all dead, you've beaten the track and can move to the next.

But what happens if you (a) don't want to complete a set number of laps or (b) don't want to kill innocent pedestrians? Aha! In that case you'll find yourself in a brutal destruction derby. To win, all you need do is destroy all the other cars while not becoming destroyed in the process. Get the picture? Actually, you probably don't because *Carmageddon* is one of those games you really need to play for yourself to appreciate the subtleties and intricacies. For instance, although what I've already said is perfectly true – you can play the game in three entirely different ways – what tends to happen is that you end up playing all three different modes simultaneously, tugging from one to another, depending on the layout of the track.

Eh? You what?

Oh dear, yes, I agree. I've just re-read the last paragraph and it is a tad confusing. Unfortunately, it's difficult to pigeon-hole *Carmageddon* because of the originality and open nature of its gameplay. The best thing to do in a case such as this, I think, is to talk you through a race, so let's pretend that a bloke called Henry has just bought *Carmageddon*, has installed it and is on the options screen. Let's also pretend

You often end up in a *Carmageddon* sandwich... just try to make sure you're not the filling.



(Main) If only she'd listened to her mum earlier: "Don't forget to wear clean knickers dear – you might get run over."
(Centre) No, Pammy, even your giant rubberised lips and silicon funbags won't shield the blow.
(Bottom) In the match between zimmer frame and bull bars, the bull bars are going to win every time.

(Top) With eventual access to every car in the game, everyone is going to have their favourite, and for the record this is mine – the Cortina Estate (I'm sad like that). (Bottom) In your best David Coleman voice: "Extraordinary... eeerrrr, what happened next?"

that Henry hasn't read the manual and thinks he's got himself a straightforward racing game, like *Screamer* or something. Oh, and while we're at it, let's invent a chum for Henry, so he's got someone to talk to. Let's call this bloke, er, Barry. Here goes...

Henry does the business

Henry: Shall I choose the chick or the bloke?
Barry: Pick the chick, pick the chick. I love her!
Henry: No. I'll pick the bloke. I prefer his car.
Barry: Look, there's a 'parts' shop, where you can buy stuff. Buy an engine upgrade.
Henry: I can't. I haven't got any money. Hey look, you can buy armour and stuff too. What's the point of that?
Barry: Probably in case you accidentally crash or something, I suppose. You won't need it if you're careful.
Henry: Blimey, there are loads of courses, look at that. There must be about 40 or so, wouldn't you think?
Barry: Yeah, but I bet you can't select the ones highlighted in red, so you've only got three for now. Go for the second one, Coastal Carnage – it looks quite nice.
Henry: Okay, here we go then...

Race on...

Game voice: Five, four, three, two, one, GO...
Henry: Bloody hell! I've just been shunted up the arse! Look! That big bloody yellow thing! It rammed me up the ringpiece! That's not fair!
Barry: Yes, it is a bit out of order, isn't it? But look, your timer's ticking down. You'd better get to a checkpoint.
Henry: I'm all annoyed now! Seethe.
Barry: Watch out, watch out, there's an old lady in the road...
Henry: *(Swerving)* Phew, that was close. Yaaargh! I don't believe it! The bloody yellow thing's heading back. It's driving straight at...
Barry: Bloody hell! It got the old lady too!
Henry: Bastard! Bastard! Oh no, I'm going over the edge. Whooooo...
Barry: Whooooo...
Henry: Whooooof! Yerk! Shit! Look, that icon must mean I've damaged my back wheels.
Barry: I'm not surprised, it was quite a drop. Hey, look at your timer. You'll never make it to a checkpoint, even if there's a ramp back up to the road. Uh, careful, there's anoth...
Henry: ...Pedestrian. Yes, sorry, I couldn't avoid him in time.
Barry: Henry, you've just been given an extra nine seconds on your timer. Do you think it was the...
Barry: I don't know. Let's see. There's an old man. *(Sploosh)*
Henry: Yes, another nine seconds. Erm, and you got a bit of cash, too. Did you notice? I bet that'll help pay for your buggered wheels. Oh, look, there's a ramp – that'll take you back to the main road, for sure.
Henry: Not yet, I've just spotted a herd of cows and some more people.

Much hilarious carnage ensues...

20 minutes later

Barry: Okay mate, steady on, you've got ten minutes on your clock now, I think it's time to get back into the race.
Henry: No need, it looks as if the race has just come back to me.
Barry: Jesus! It's the yellow thing with the spike again!

I've been in a real destruction derby, which was bloody scary, and* Carmageddon *is as near to that as you're going to get.

(Top) We kill them here... We kill them there... *Carmageddon* allows you to venture absolutely everywhere. (2nd) The Parts Shop. Funny, I only went in to buy some spark plugs. (3rd) I pretend all the people are ex-girlfriends and then I take great pleasure in mowing them all down. The two pictured above are an example of the better-looking ones. (Left) With skidmarks this colour, you just know you're having fun.

Stainless Steel have worked hard on the physics of the game, and it's really paid off.

Henry: And he's not alone. He... Oooof!
Barry: Cool!
Henry: I'll get him for that.
Barry: Handbrake turn, handbrake turn, quick, quick...
Henry: Take that you bastard!
Barry: Nice one! Look, he's damaged. He can't turn as fast now. Get him again, get him again...
Henry: Oooof! What in sod's name was that?
Barry: It was the spiky VW Bug, look in your mirror.
Henry: Right, that bloody does it. War! And if I survive this, I'm going to get a better car for the next race.

So endeth the tale

The car handling and physics stuff is truly outstanding. Whether you're racing, fighting or killing, the rewards reaped are directly proportional to your skill. *Carmageddon*, just like a good *Tekken*-style beat 'em up, is a game that improves and improves the more you play. For instance, see a group of peds (pedestrians) huddled fairly close together and you may, if you're nifty enough, be able to handbrake turn yourself into a 60mph sidewards slide. If your aim is true, you can take them all out in one go and earn a combo bonus (the accolade is nice, the extra cash is even nicer).

You can even get multiple combos. Take the above sideways slide, for example – splash four peds and you get your quadruple combo, but if you also crush them against a building or cliff or something, you get an extra bonus for having performed a 'piledriver'. Likewise, should you be airborne at the moment of impact, you might also earn yourself coin and applause for 'artistic impression'. Get the drift? And the same goes for the smash and crash action with the other vehicles: destroy them, yes, but please do it with panache, because not only does it pay better, but also the chances are exceedingly high that you'll be calling up the replay facility. This brilliant facility has a chillingly intelligent camera that knows exactly where to place itself at all times. Hoorah for replays.

This is my ideal Christmas at home with the grandparents.

These are some of the other contenders. They look like people I went to college with (Circa Fields of the Nephilim). The blonde was my girlfriend for a spell, but I got rid of her when I found her smearing entrails over her genitals. It just wasn't my scene, I suppose.

Holy mother of god...

Oh for a bit more space to tell you more about *Carmageddon*, such as the size and scope of the different tracks (they're behemoths believe you me, with nowhere off-limits), and the scenery, which is all completely interactive. And did I mention the power-ups? No, but I will now. Extra time, mega turbo, concrete car, weird gravity – the list is endless, honest, and contains one called 'Blind Pedestrians', which stops them trying to run out of your way unless you beep your horn, in which case they do all manner of hilarious things (before you kill them).

Unfortunately, there's no room to explain further, but you'll find out for yourself because unless you're a complete and utter moron you'll be buying *Carmageddon*. It's an essential purchase, I'd say, just like *Quake* was. In fact it's the driving game equivalent of *Quake* when you get right down to it, which means you won't be surprised to hear there's a comprehensive multi-player mode lurking within. Don't worry if you're a member of the vast majority with no access to a network, because the artificial intelligence of the single-player game computer-controlled drivers is nothing short of wicked.

Let me put it like this: I've been in a real destruction derby, which was bloody scary, and *Carmageddon* is as near to that as you're going to get. You FEEL the contact, and that's no joke. The sound effects are superb too. Yes, everything is superb, and it all melds together into something out of this world. Grovel, grovel, fawn, fawn, arse-lick, arse-lick, *Carmageddon* is God! *(Blimey! – Ed.)*

In Perspective

Screamer 2 and *Destruction Derby 2* seem positively banal and two-dimensional by comparison, but then you don't get to run grannies over and drive aroun levels called 'Beef Curtains'. In fact, every driving game in the world seems positively banal an two-dimensional by comparison. Nuff said?

Destruction Derby 2

Screamer 2

Carmageddon

Big Red Racing

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: P90
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick

Score

Fucking smart.

95

Price: £34.99
Release date: May
Publisher: SCI
Telephone: 0171 585 3308

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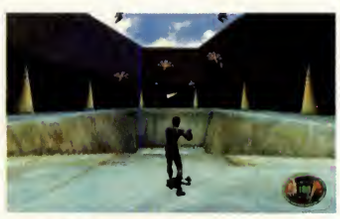
MDK

PC ZONE Classic

MDK stars a comely young gentleman with a gigantic helmet covering his face. For reasons that don't warrant description here, Charlie Brooker was asked to review it.

I KNOW SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW, nyaah, nyaah nyaah nya-nyaah-nyaah. I know what the initials MDK stand for. It isn't 'Murder Death Kill', as was previously reported. And it isn't 'Make Diana King' or 'Model Dates Kipper' or any of the other slogans they've used in the ads. It's something else, and I know what it is. Okay, as far as privileged information goes, it's hardly on a par with knowing what Alistair Stewart gets up to in bed, or which soap star pays call-girls to beat him with sticks, or the name of an underground club where you can see the pair of them doing these things live on stage; but it is something that I know, and that most people do not. Since I'm a bit slow and simple, this kind of thing doesn't happen very often. Usually, I'm the last to hear about anything. Why, I had no idea that Leslie Crowther was dead until the other day: I'd booked him to entertain at my sister's wedding reception and, let me tell you, it really upset the little ones when they wheeled him in.

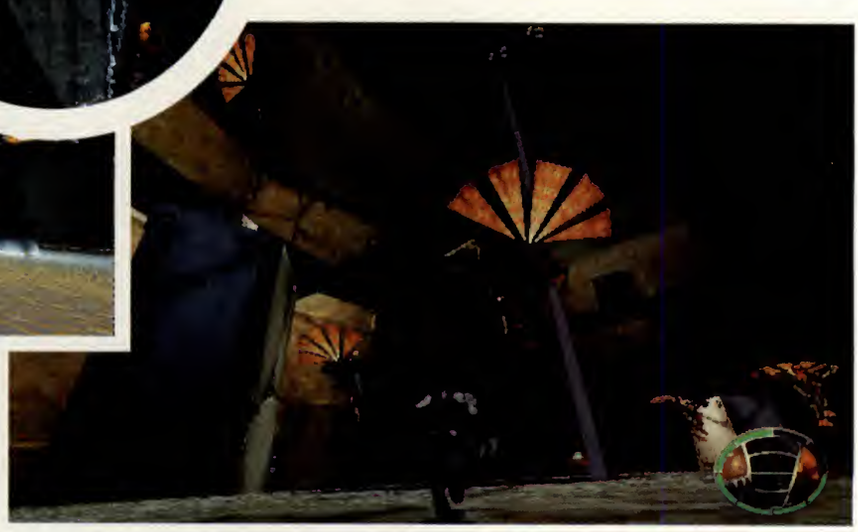
So, for once in my life, I know something you don't know. And I'm going to string it out for as long as I can, by not telling you the answer until the end of this review. Sheesh. Life really doesn't get much more exciting than this...



Kurt considers suing the makers of the indoor fireworks he brought home for Christmas.

Mice Drink Ketchup

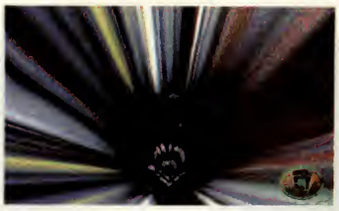
Space is tight, so let's skip the traditional storyline explanation bit, shall we? Rest assured, the plot makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. The



(Top) Let's face it – it's one of the most gorgeous games we've ever seen... (Right) A scene from the forthcoming Shiny production, _Attack Of The Turkey Men_.

Other things MDK could stand for

MEXICAN DONKEY KNOBBER
MIGHTY DOG'S KNACKERS
MALEVOLENT DEFECATION KING
MMMM, DAMP KNICKERS
MASTURBATION DESTROYS KNUCKLES
MOB DEVOURS KOALA
MADONNA'S DIABOLICAL KID



(Above left) Oooh, it's just like the old opening scene to *Doctor Who*, isn't it? (Above) Stand back everyone, Kurt's got an itchy nose. Whoops too late!

upshot is that you're controlling this young bloke called Kurt, who is faced with the daunting task of infiltrating a bunch of gigantic alien cities, then exploring his way through them, while wasting anyone or anything that gets in his way. Kurt isn't entirely alone because he has two dedicated friends who step in now and again to lend a helping hand. First, there's a dog called Bones who will pop up on occasion to help out with an impromptu bombing raid. And the second friend is Doctor Fluke Hawkins, the mad scientist type back at home, who supplies the odd mid-game weaponry upgrade (and 'odd' is the right word when we're talking about *MDK*'s weaponry).

It's no good letting your brain slip into neutral, because you'll need to formulate strategies to survive.

So far, so simple – the whole shebang is, on first glance, a drop-dead gorgeous 3D platform game cum shoot 'em up, with a leading character who looks as if he's just shimmied off the pages of *Skin Two* magazine. But there's more to it than that. A straightforward arcade game this is not. At any moment, you're just as likely to find yourself snowboarding through a sheet of ice as you are jumping from one ledge to another. Shiny have packed as many imaginative little twists into the game as possible, leaving us with a sprawling great chunk of continually surprising entertainment.

Anyone approaching *MDK* with the usual preconceptions about arcade games foremost in their mind is likely to be frustrated, maybe even disappointed, with what they find. It's no good letting your brain slip into neutral, because you'll often need to formulate strategies to survive. Without giving ▶

Meet Dishy Kurt

Kurt, the lead character, is a remarkably versatile chap. Whereas most young men of his age are content with wasting their days sprawled across a threadbare sofa, shovelling endless handfuls of floppy, glistening pizza into their fat ugly mouths and idly ping-ponging between Sky Sports and a 'Film With Some Tits In It' on the Movie Channel, chewing with their mouths open and scratching their sweat-embalmed testicles until the inevitable coronary carts them off to the great rubbish tip in the sky, Kurt is made of sterner stuff. His muscular, angled physique suggests a lifetime spent in the testing department of Abdominizer™ Inc. ("It's the only abdominal product that *locks you on target*"); combine that with the kinky rubber outfit (or 'coil suit') and you have a package that drives the chicks wild.

But it's not just the beefy physique and sexy togs that make Kurt what he is. There's also the equipment to consider. Supplied by Dr Fluke Hawkins, Kurt's inventor mentor, all manner of big boy's toys are on offer and are just waiting to be picked up and fiddled with...

RIBBON CHUTE

Let's face it, if Kurt were to land awkwardly and twist his ankle after five minutes, he'd make a pretty lame superhero (literally). Thank your lucky stars for the ribbon chute. Simply leap from a great height, hold down the jump button, and voilà! You're gliding through the air with the greatest of ease, like some kind of rubber-encrusted dove. Apart from preventing embarrassing ankle-twisting incidents, the chute also allows you to reach otherwise inaccessible parts of the landscape.

Quite how the hell this thing is supposed to keep you airborne is beyond me – surely a normal, lo-fi parachute would have done the trick – but who really cares when it looks as cool as this?

CHAINGUN

As a walking stick is to a gammy leg, as a cup of mouthwash and condom are to a prostitute, so is a rapid-fire chaingun to a pent-up sense of rage. Let fly with your handheld bullet-spewer whenever you see fit – not only will it make you feel better, but it'll show those alien ne'er-do-wells who's boss, and no mistake.

SNIPER GUN

Running around spraying everyone and everything in sight with bullets is superb fun – for a while. But there soon comes a time when even the most carefree gun-toting lunatic yearns for something a little more precise. Well, yearn no more, because in *MDK*, you can bolt that hand-held chaingun to your face and turn it into a super-accurate sniping gun instead. Simply hit the spacebar and there you are, peering through the telescopic sights and fantasising that you're Edward Fox in *Day Of The Jackal*.

The range on the thing is quite incredible: it's possible to zoom in on an enemy who's perched atop a building on the other side of town, then shoot his foot off. Furthermore, it comes with its own range of wacky artillery, from homing bullets to heavy duty mortar bombs. If there was an award for Neatest In-Game Gizmo at the videogaming 'Oscars', then this would win.

POWER-UPS

Apart from the aforementioned hardware, there are additional bits of kit that become available later in the game. Down they float, dangling from their little rubber parachutes like kinky S&M offerings from the gods.

Half the fun lies in working out just what in the Sam Hill half of these power-ups actually do, but the names speak volumes: 'The World's Most Interesting Bomb' and 'The World's Smallest Nuclear Explosion' are exactly what you think they are.

(Left) Shame there isn't an option to take snapshots. That'd look nice on a postcard. (Below left) In 'Sniper mode', it's possible to zoom in so close, you can almost make out your enemy's blackheads... (Below) One of Kurt's most useful power-ups – it's an inflatable decoy. Drop one of these and the bad guys get more than a little confused...

too much away, there are many occasions where you will find yourself faced with a seemingly insurmountable problem – a problem that can be solved only by applying a quick dose of lateral thinking. Well, it certainly took me by surprise: an arcade game where you have to think? "Duncan's horses did turn and eat each other"*. It just goes against all the pre-written laws of nature.

Malevolent Defecation King

The graphics really are something else. *MDK* looks quite unlike any other PC game out there. It's a bit like playing your way through a particularly well-drawn *2000AD* comic strip – right down to the way it mixes stylised sci-fi visuals with quirky humorous touches. The 'true 3D' graphics are wonderfully smooth. Incidentally, it's funny how the phrase 'true 3D' keeps popping up in computer mags, despite the fact that anything that exists exclusively upon a 2D screen clearly can't be truly 3D at all – proof that the average 'puter geek really *does* need to get out more. Although Kurt himself looks a little out of place at times – why Shiny decided to use a sprite, when all the enemies and scenery are made from polygons is beyond me.

The sound also deserves a mention – especially the choice and quality of the music. None of it is spooled from the CD, so while the quality is a little 'fuzzy', there's no CD-access pauses to get in the way of the action. Best of all, Shiny have acquired the rights to some instantly recognisable themes, such as the *James Bond* action score, which crop up occasionally to lend some atmospheric weight to the proceedings. A very nice touch.

Anyway, all in all, it's certainly worthy of your attention. As far as action games go, it's no *Quake* or *Carmageddon*, but it *is* defiantly original – and, more important, it's damn good fun to play.

Oh, yeah – and before I go – the title stands for *Mission: Deliver Kindness*.

Mightily Demanding Knockabout

***MDK's* minimum recommended spec is a P90 with 16Mb of RAM. That's the bare minimum. Now, I'm not going to harp on about how unfair it is on all you 486 owners out there, because you already know how unfair it is. Yet the fact remains that you couldn't have a game like this on a 486. So if you want to play it, tough. It's time to upgrade.**

Sorry, but that's the way it goes.

Multiple Dead Kennedys

Ever seen Oliver Stone's *JFK*? Then you're no doubt familiar with the infamous 'Zapruder footage'. Shot by tourist Abraham Zapruder on that fateful day in Dealy Plaza, it captures the Kennedy assassination in stomach-churning Technicolor close-up. Apart from demonstrating just how much damage a bullet can do to somebody's head with sickening clarity (we're talking exploding watermelon here), it raises serious doubts concerning the 'official' version of events (ie Kennedy was shot by a lone gunman, armed with magic route-switching bullets).

Yeah? And? So? What? Well, the 'sniper mode' of *MDK* reminded me of the Zapruder film a bit. Just thought I'd mention it, that's all. Check out these screenshots and keep repeating: "Back, and to the left... back, and to the left."

In Perspective

So, after a 3D platform game ar we sir? *MDK* undoubtedly scores high in the originality stakes an it's very entertaining to play. Th fact that the main character is a sprite which makes it look a littl dated coupled with the fact that it needs an absolute monster of machine to play it are really just minor niggles. If you've got the hardware, you could do a lot worse. Why don't you try some these for size? Here's how we reckon it measures up against the competition...

Tomb Raider

Ecstatica II

Fade To Black

MDK

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb
Processor: P90
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Joystick, mouse, keyboard

Score

My diagnosis? Knockout.

Price: £44.00
Release date: March
Publisher: Interplay
Tel: 01628 423666
Website: http://www.shiny.com

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* It's a line from *Macbeth*, you culture-dodging, knuckle-dragging, dead-eyed powerless masses, you. Get back to your poxy multiplexes and your cable TV and your well-thumbed copies of *Herd-Following Monthly*. Baaaaa, woeful sheep, *baaaaaaaa*!

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GROLIER INTERACTIVE

Need For Speed 2

Give Duncan MacDonald eight of the fastest cars in the multiverse to play with and you'd expect him to go all squiffy and pervy. Instead he gets all miffed and stroppy. Why? Read on and find out.

IT OFTEN HELPS IN A REVIEW OF A SIM IF you can lend the proceedings the benefit of your very own personal experience. Take Simon Bradley, for instance, PC Zone's flight sim bloke: he's a real-life helicopter pilot and, so he says, has also flown numerous military jets (even, ahem, ones which don't exist yet). But what I'm saying is this... in the case of Simon Bradley, exaggerations aside, if a helicopter sim comes in he can tell you – with a certain degree of accuracy – if it flies like the real McCoy.

So back to me, then, and I'm staring at the opening screen of *Need For Speed 2*, at the list of cars you can drive: the McLaren F1, Ferrari F50, Ford GT90, Jaguar XJ220, Lotus GTI, Lotus Esprit V8, Italdesign Cala and the Isdera 112i.

Hmmm. A question rears its ugly head, and I'm going to have to deal with it now...

How many have you driven?

How many of them have I actually driven? Erm, well, side-stepping that question for a moment, I often cycle down Park Lane on my bike, and there's a car showroom down the bottom end which has a McLaren F1 in the window. I've stopped and looked at it in detail on a couple of occasions, so you could say I sort of know it inside out. And as for the Italdesign Cala and Isdera 112i, I think they're concept cars, aren't they? No? Forgive me if I'm wrong, but I'm sure they're not actually in production, meaning – if I'm right – that nobody has driven them. And as for the other five? Well, I've seen Jeremy Clarkson talking about them on *Top Gear*. I took it all in, even if he is a bit of a ponce. I know about their under and oversteer characteristics, the fact that the power comes in a tad late on this one, the back end's a bit twitchy on that one, and the other hasn't even got a bloody radio. You know? I can imagine, I can imagine...

Your credentials please...

You mean my credentials for reviewing a driving sim which contains eight of the most powerful road cars on the planet? Um, well, I'm good at driving in the snow; I'm good at hand-brake turns; I once had a highish speed head-on crash in which the other bloke broke both legs while I didn't hurt anything (even though I wasn't wearing a seatbelt); I once

(Above) Car detailing is high and as well as choosing which model you want to drive and race against, you can also select the colour. As well as the eight dream cars, the game features loads of other traffic, such as school buses and 2CVs.

(Above) Although a couple of the tracks are quite speedy, most of them are too twisty and turny to be really driveable. These cars are quick, so why not include some quick roads?

won a go-kart race; and... and... and... Shit.

Okay, I suppose I don't have any credentials when you get right down to it. In fact, having thought about speeds and things, I've got to admit that the fastest car I've ever driven (embarrassed glow) was a Renault Clio. No, hang on – I rented a Mitsubishi when I was on holiday in America once, and I got 115mph out of it, driving through Death Valley. Pathetic really, but it was good fun at the time. Still, I don't expect you've ever driven a 220mph road vehicle yourself, either. *("Yes I bloody well have" – a millionaire reader.)*

Accurate modelling

In the first *Need For Speed* the programmers tied up with *Road & Track* magazine, which is where they got all their 'equations' and suchlike. It was all meant to be very realistic, basically. However, this time they've tied up instead with all the real-life manufacturers of the cars involved – as is apparent from a page in the manual which is full of TM and Copyright symbols attached to the beginnings and ends of words like McLaren, Ferrari, Ford, Lotus and so on.

In other words, *Need For Speed 2* is meant to be pretty much the be-all and end-all when it comes down to the physics of supercar handling and performance. Unfortunately, as I've explained, I'm not in the position to argue the case, even though I'd dearly love to, so now's probably a good time to change tack and move on to the game structure.

What's the recipe today, Jim?

Okay, so we've got our eight cars, right? And there are six rather large circuits. So how do they fit together? Well, there are three basic race modes and a few toggleable options to boot. First off there's the simple Single Race, which you can also read as 'Practice'. Select any car you like (you can choose its colour and whether it's auto or manual), any track (more of these later) and then select your opposition.

And here's where the options come in. Want a straight race between yourself and just one computer-controlled vehicle? You've got it: just decide which of the cars you want to go head-to-head against. How about you versus a whole bunch? Again, no problem... you can have a mixture of manufacturers, or seven of the same type. Want to do a time trial? Against the clock? Just you on your own? To get the hang of things, and beat your own records? Go for it. Want it arcadey? Select this option and you'll find yourself racing at the thin end of the wedge, meaning you've got heaps of traction and won't bleed off too much speed when scraping along walls and so forth. Or go for Simulation, in which case the above doesn't apply. Finally, and this is the brilliant thing about *Need For Speed 2*, you can select 'traffic', which gives you, well, traffic: things to overtake, and oncoming things to crash into while doing so. Cool. (Er, just like the first game.)

Beyond this is the Tournament Mode which takes place over all six tracks with a Formula One-style points system: win the season and gain access to the 'secret car'. Then, finally, there's Knockout Mode, in which – again over all six tracks – the car which finishes last place in each successive race gets 'dropped'. Win the final head-to-head, should you fare that well, and the bonus track is made available. (And let's hope it's a good one, 'cos in the first game the bonus track was shite.)

(Left) Collisions add to the fun. (Main) Each car features an accurate representation of the dashboard and controls. Handling is another matter.

Talking of shite tracks...

Oh dear. Time for the shit to hit the fan. The main selling point of *Need For Speed 2* – ignoring for the moment the fact that all the cars travel at nine squillion mph and have

Ford

(Above) EA have decided to ditch the tie-in with *Road & Track* magazine (presumably 'cos they've realised that we're not all US subscribers) and plumped for tie-ins with manufacturers instead.

(Left) Although it's claimed that *Need For Speed 2*'s game engine incorporates real physics for accurate handling, in reality it's very difficult to tell when you're on the track.

accurately modelled interiors – is that the tracks, this time around, allow (and I quote) "for complete freedom". There are short-cuts, essentially, and you can travel off-road, to encounter differing terrain and the like. Oh, and let's not forget the 'interactive scenery', like cones, boxes, and on and on, which move if hit. Oh, and there's the extensive replay facility, split-screen mode (which is nice) and more multi-player options than you could shake an Austin Allegro at.

However, there are also a few 'buts' knocking around. And they're bloody big 'buts', too.

The first 'but' is mainly down to bad timing: *Need For Speed 2* has missed the boat – big-time. You see there's another driving game (reviewed on page 84) which actually manages to deliver the promises *Need For Speed 2* can only lay hollow claims to. Here's a snippet of conversation between me and Charlie Brooker (who was watching as I played *Need For Speed 2* for the purposes of this review).

"You don't seem too impressed," he said.

"I'm not," I replied. "The goalposts have been moved... *Carmageddon* has made them wider!"

"You mean narrower," he corrected.

"Er, yes," I said. (I always was crap with metaphors.)

But anyway, he was in complete agreement. So was everyone else in the room, to be honest. Yes, *Need For Speed 2* may be more open than the original, but considering that two or so years have passed between the games, you'd expect it to be. Nevertheless, let's move to gripe number two...

Gripe two

Still on the tracks, but a different moan. The *Need For Speed 2* designers have gone for what you could call 'fantasy tracks'. The strength of the first game, though, was that you had all these 'real' cars, and you raced along 'real' roads. Fine. Great. And oncoming traffic, as well. It worked a treat, so why didn't they continue the trend? Give me a McLaren F1, for example, and I want to take it on an autobahn, or through Arizona... not on some whacky Himalayan course which includes a rope bridge and 200 snowy hairpins. You know what I mean? The mixture of so-called realism (the cars) and half-baked trippiness (the tracks) simply doesn't work: if the point of the exercise is to travel at 400,000mph, who's got time to notice, or care about, a giant windmill? What the designers should have done (for example) was to make *Need For Speed 2* a race from the east to the west coast of America, with refuelling stops or something whenever new scenery had to be loaded in. And cop cars and road blocks. That sort of gig.

Gripe three and beyond

Back to the car handling, which of course I'm not qualified to talk about, having only owned and driven Datsuns and what have you. But listen to this: choose any car in *Carmageddon* (and the original *Need For Speed* come to that) and perform a 'donut' and you get/got precisely that: roughly circular tyre tracks, but with ovoid tendencies. You wibble about. In *Need For Speed 2*, however, your car tyres do in fact draw a perfect circle, which overwrites itself again and again and again. Bad physics? What else can it be? The crashes look and feel wrong as well, which may lead some people to say 'that's not the point of the game'. And maybe it isn't, but all I can counter with is this: what exactly *is* the point of *Need For Speed 2*? It's neither one thing nor the other. If you want to go really, really fast then the tracks are sort of wrong. If, on the other hand, you want to piss about and have some fun, then the cars are wrong. And fancy a replay? Got a spare couple of years for it to load? No.

To my mind it's a case of taking an original game (*Need For Speed*, obviously, which was brilliant in its day) and aiming the sequel in precisely the wrong direction. Oh, and did I mention that there's a hundred squilliobytes of advertorial FMV for all the cars in the showcase? Well, there is, and if drooling over that sort of stuff lights your candle then add ten to the final score... oh, and get a life.

In Perspective

Need For Speed 2 fails to improve on its prequel, and both games suffer at the all-conquering hands of the new god which is the mighty *Carmageddon*.

Screamer 2, although lacking the crisp, clean graphical style of *Need For Speed 2*, just pips it in terms of ball-twitching excitement and heart-pounding exhilaration.

Need For Speed 1

Need For Speed 2

Screamer 2

Carmageddon

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Joystick, yoke, keyboard

Score

A missed opportunity: lots of fast cars placed in imaginary scenarios that aren't particularly relevant.

78

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PC ZONE

Keyboard TEMPLATE

This keyboard template has been created by PC Zone. Your best bet is probably to photocopy it and then you can fill it in for whatever game you want... Useful eh? Loads of people have written in asking for something like this, so here you go...

Cave Wars

PC ZONE Recommended

We could've made a crack about Paul Presley's living conditions being little removed from that of a cave dweller. But it wouldn't really have been a joke, more a harrowing documentary...

WE ARE ALL PRONE, MY FAITHFUL children, to the occasional lapse in judgement. Every once in a while we will tune our television of life, however briefly, to the Noel Edmonds' House Party of fate. Sometimes the demon alcohol is to blame, sometimes it's fatigue. Sometimes it's even a mild curiosity. But suffice to say, we can all on occasion misjudge things.

I committed such a felony only the other day. I'd been given *Cave Wars* to review by the powers that be after having had the pleasure of writing a Blueprint about it the month before. Thing is, it looked nice enough on face value, and EIDOS' PR chappie was enthusiastic while taking me through it, but I couldn't help but think that it was all a bit, well, basic. I kept wanting to say, "You have seen *Command & Conquer*, haven't you? You do know that strategy games have moved on tremendously over the past two years, don't you?"

But I didn't. It would only have upset him. Plus I would have been wrong – as I found out when I started playing the damn game. "My god," I remember thinking (which was odd since my affinity for religion is on a par with my love of squeezing live eels into my eye), "this is actually pretty damn good." As I say, we all have the occasional lapse.

Why I doubted it

I should point out that it's hardly the best strategy game ever to find its way into the *Zone* office in-tray. One of the things that limits the game is that it's very fussy. The idea is the age-old one: you take command of a race and have to build up its military forces and civilisation from scratch over an ever-expanding landscape. You encounter other races and hack them to bits and pour table salt onto their festering arm stumps to teach them a lesson. And eventually you conquer the planet and live happily ever after. Probably going mad in your dotage and decreeing all sorts of weird proclamations like forcing everyone to call each other Susan and making Thursdays official Pie-Wearing days. Just because you can.

But because Avalon Hill are primarily known for their really deep table-top wargames, they've decided to appeal to the anorak in all of us and make things as unnecessarily finicky as possible. If you want to mine some bronze, for instance, essential for making sure your soldiers don't get all embarrassed fighting with swords made out of wood, you can't just tell a mining crew to go over there and get the bronze. You have to line the team up manually next to the supply. Tell them to cut away at the rock surrounding the material. Wait for them to finish and then tell them to start mining. It's all very fiddly and could have been easily avoided by just giving the miners a teensy bit of intelligence, reducing the whole palaver to just one mouse click. Instead you have to keep checking the team each turn to make sure they've arrived and then to see whether they've finished digging and so on. Which is a real pain when you've got a load of other things to worry about. *Cave Wars* is full of 'little things' like

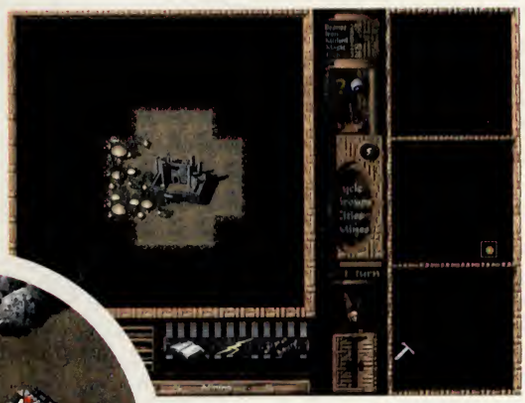
The hi-res graphics mean that you can still see a lot of what's going on, despite a lot of the screen being taken up with the menu control system. The detail level on the machines and vehicles is high, which means that everything looks nice, though a few more frames of animation wouldn't have gone amiss.

If you want to make certain weapons you'll have to mine the raw materials yourself. On the face of it this isn't a problem, but the fact that you have to manually line the team up next to the supply and wait for them to finish is a bit of a bind. Next Avalon Hill will be asking you to wipe their arses.

Artificial intelligence

Unusually (and rather refreshingly, some might say), Avalon Hill have put their cards on the table regarding the artificial intelligence used in the game. On page 35 of the manual they go into detail about exactly how it works. The AI has better visibility than you and makes very good use of magic. It's exceptionally good at managing its population and resources (better than Avalon Hill themselves apparently) and it's prone to grudges against people that beat it.

Having said that, the sweetest plum of all comes when you do beat it. You actually get a message saying, "The AI wishes to surrender. Do you accept?" Not just, "Game Over – You Win" or anything. The AI actually surrenders to you! And you can force it to play on if you want, just to rub its nose in it. Ha ha.



The fact that nothing is automated might put some people off, but at least you get complete control.

that. Nothing, and I mean nothing, is automated. Not even slightly. Meaning that your initial thoughts on the game are likely to be unfavourable. As were mine.

Why I ended up liking it

But the reviewer's job is to spend time with a game. And the more time I spent playing *Cave Wars*, the more I started to enjoy it. Certainly, I got enraged every time I tried to click on a new troop only to inadvertently give the previous troop a new set of movement instructions because the stupid thing didn't automatically close the Move options after I'd set them. But I was increasingly more willing to overlook the faults as the meat of the game was proving to be rather tasty.

Part of it is that, as you generally find with all resource-management games, when you get a bit of expansion under your belt you start really getting into keeping everything working. Unlike quite a lot of resource management games, *Cave Wars* somehow manages to keep that hook embedded in your moistened lip a little bit longer than most. Part of the charm is the interesting setting – the world(s) contain various levels. Not difficulty levels but different terrain on top of each other, which means you can perform some sneaky tunnelling raids on enemy towns if you want. There's a good progression curve as well. It's easy enough to get the hang of the basic principles and then as you start expanding, the game opens up to match. Mostly I think it's just the inherent sense of fun that Avalon Hill have injected into it – for instance, one of the races has a Mass Murder special ability, while another race are basically cowards and have to have their feet nailed to the ground to stop them retreating.

It does have its problems, as I said, and because of this *Cave Wars* is likely to appeal mainly to the more anoraky of strategy gamers. But beneath the off-putting exterior there really is a very enjoyable game within. There are better titles around, but there are also a lot worse taking up valuable shelf space in your local gaming stores. Z

The best victory message in the world

At one point during my arduous but not altogether unrewarding journey with *Cave Wars*, I was getting very hot under the collar indeed. Frankly, the annoying little aspects had started to really get to me and I was almost hurling verbal abuse at the screen. As if it sensed my frustration, the computer then did the sweetest thing in the world by declaring me the winner and displaying the most gratifying victory message I have ever read in my life:

"Ibido is yours," it said. "You cruelly execute the enemy leaders and begin a reign of terror unmatched in history, turning your empire into an underground nightmare that a denizen of Hell would shudder to look upon. Congratulations!"

What more can I say? Bloody brilliant!

In Perspectiv

Cave Wars is very anoraky, but still puts up an enjoyable challenge if you're prepared t stick at it and don't mind doi absolutely everything yourself *Warcraft 2* and *Civilization 2* similar kinds of games and ar both somewhat more accessib *Civilization 2* is also far more engaging, even though it's les combat-orientated.

Civilization 2

Warcraft 2

Cave Wars

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: Pentium 75
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
NB: Although *Cave Wars* is a DOS game, it should run okay under Windows 95 in a DOS box withou you having to re-set your machin

Score

Cave Wars has its faults, but there is a good game buried in there if you can bothered to stick at it lon enough to find it.

81

Price: £39.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: EIDOS Interactive
Telephone: 0181 780 2222
Website: http://www.eidos.com

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Formula One

PC ZONE Classic

It sold more copies than any other game on the PlayStation last year. And Patrick McCarthy thought it was something to do with baby food. That's the kind of expertise that gets you a review around these parts.

There are 17 tracks, a variety of options to give the game longevity, and even varied weather conditions.

WHERE MICROPROSE'S F1GP2 IS AN OUT-and-out simulation of Formula 1, in which the set-up of your car, your race strategy and a dash of tactical thinking are all as important as driving fast, Formula 1 is an arcade game through and through. Basically, it's aimed squarely at anyone who likes the idea of launching into a full F1 season, but would rather forget all the tedious bits – fiddling with car set-ups, poring over telemetry, appearing on-stage at the Albert Hall with the Spice Girls – in favour of arcade thrills and spills. Think The Need For Speed, RAC Rally or Screamer for F1 fans.

Details, details

There are two main modes – Arcade and Grand Prix – each with three levels of difficulty. Arcade takes a pure coin-op approach, with checkpoints and time limits, in which you have to finish in the points to progress through the season. Grand Prix mode is more realistic – although nowhere near the complexity of MicroProse's offering – but does have practice and qualifying sessions, pit stops, collision damage and tyre wear and simple car set-ups. There's also a Ladder mode, in which you challenge increasingly difficult opponents in Grand Prix, and a Duel facility where you just race one other driver. The licence is for the 1995 season, which means Adelaide rather than Melbourne, Schumacher's still at Benetton, Villeneuve doesn't exist and Nigel Mansell is one of the four McLaren drivers available. Oh, and you can't alter the drivers' names. There are also options for customising your own little mini-Championships by racing at whatever courses you want, and for messing about with the number of other drivers in the race.

Main: Hockenheim: Scene of many spectacular races – and many spectacular deaths.
Middle: They tried desperately to finish the race before Monaco was flooded.
Bottom: These cameramen are very brave, aren't they?

Driving in my car

Although more action-orientated than *F1GP2*, braking distances, lap times and race times have all been accurately reproduced. At the easier levels, it shouldn't be long before you break records and win races and Championships. For example, you should be able to do reasonably well with a Sauber at

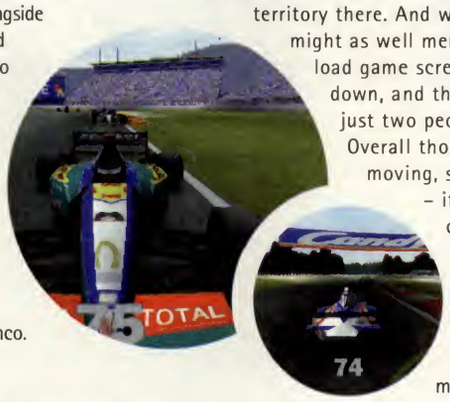
The drama of Formula One in all its low-angled glory.

Zoom With A View

The thing that makes you realise this isn't a simulation is that there's no basic in-car view. The nearest option is a nose-cone view, or a raised cockpit view which, the first time you see it, is disconcerting. It's like you're standing up in the cockpit as part of some bizarre stunt act. Try it in real life and you'd lose about 70mph in speed, and 30 pounds in weight thanks to uncontrolled bowel movements. It's actually a pretty useful view once you become accustomed to it – you can see a lot more than the width of your tyres, which is all you get in most driving games. If you go back to the other style views in other games, they seem a bit low to the ground and restricted by comparison.

medium level, or win the Championship with a McLaren or Ferrari. It's advisable to switch collision damage off – not because you're a scumbag cheat, but because the computer drivers go for you like they're Jean Alesi and you've just admitted you shagged their mother. Get alongside them, between them and the racing line, and they'll run you off the road even if you're two laps ahead. Think Prost versus Senna. You'll soon get used to it.

At easier settings, you can make up for any deficiencies in car speed by having the odd 'flirtation' with a stretch of kerbing or even, if you let go of the accelerator, a few yards of grass. But try it at the hardest setting, or touch the accelerator when you're on the grass, and you'll be heading sideways towards the Armco.



Pretty pictures, but...

You could argue about the presentation. For example, the split times and other race information looks exactly like the telly, but is inconveniently placed to check out while you're driving; the Murray Walker commentary is too repetitive. It also lags behind the action. Both aspects would benefit from being more realistically driver-orientated (pit-crew messages and advice into your helmet's headset, for example) – but Psygnosis would probably argue that you're getting into simulation territory there. And while we're moaning, we might as well mention that the save and load game screens are too many menus down, and the multi-player option for just two people is is not up to scratch.

Overall though, *Formula One* is a fast-moving, superb looking arcade racer – if you have the hardware, of course. There are 17 tracks to learn, a variety of options to give the game longevity, a choice of cars to use, and even varied weather conditions to add a bit of mind-boggling aquaplaning-based fun.

As long as you bear in mind that this is an arcade game and not a simulation, you'll find it's a great laugh. If you're after a bit of F1 fun without the complexity of a full-on simulation, look no further.

Lush

The graphical detail in the game is nothing short of outstanding. So far, we've only seen the 3Dfx version, but all the cards mentioned in our tech specs box will have versions written for them. The already excellent PSX graphics have been zapped up even further with extra filtered textures and perspective correction, more shading and lighting to the cars, and full Gouraud shading on the worlds. As a result, the cars look superbly realistic – as we said in last month's Blueprint, they were modelled using team diagrams, photographs and video footage as reference material – and the trackside scenery is amazing, especially when you see the speed the game moves at. You can practically look into the bedroom windows of the trackside hotels on some courses (you never know, you might spot your bimbo supermodel girlfriend in there, shagging your team manager). The downside to all the graphical excellence is that even running the 'native' 3Dfx version on our office P166, we got the odd pop-up background building around Monaco at the high detail setting, and the frame rate dropped slightly when there were loads of cars on-screen, or things got too busy generally. This isn't the highest setting – the highest is Ninja – and it's not what you'd expect with a 3Dfx card. Psygnosis reckon they got the ninja setting running quickly on a P200. (And so they bloody should, you might well shout in your poshest voice.) But Monaco is by far the most complex and sophisticated course.

In Perspective

Three different games, three ways to burn rubber. But this is the only one that needs a 3D accelarator to run.

RAC Rally

Screamer

Formula 1

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium (P120 recommended)

Graphics: 3D accelerator card support only: 3Dfx 'Native' Glide; Rendition 'Native' Verite Redline; Permedia D3D; Matrox D3D; VideoLogic Power VR; ATI Rage Mk2 D3D

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick, gamepad, mouse, wheel

Note: Windows 95 only

Score

Great looking arcade-based F1 action.

90

Price: £TBC

Release date: Late April/early May

Publisher: Psygnosis

Telephone: 0151 282 3000

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Kick Off 97

PC ZONE Recommended

When we said "*Kick Off 97*" to Patrick 'Amusingly-Hard-of-Hearing' McCarthy, he thought we said, "Pick Off Auntie Bevan," and he went trekking off to Wales with a sniper's rifle.

I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I PLAYED the original Kick Off. I went round to my mate's house and he got his 'computer' out, wound it up, jiggled a few tapes about, sharpened a stick and poked it into a slot, and some blobs started running about on screen. At first I thought I was having a migraine. Then things came into focus, and got a little clearer, but they looked like those old 'joke' cartoons in comics that were sent in by readers who were hard-of-thinking. You know, a sort of fried-egg shape with a line coming out either side and "Mexican riding a bicycle" written underneath.

Well, these blobs had the central egg shape (albeit oddly-hued) with a different coloured blob on each side to denote shoulders; apparently they were footballers viewed from directly above. I gathered this when, after about five minutes of grunting from my mate and some bleeps and squeaks from the TV with the odd patch of white noise, he said from between clenched teeth: "Five-nil," and I realised I was losing a football match. My mate always spoke from between clenched teeth when playing computer games. He was very competitive. In fact, he was so competitive he wouldn't tell me the controls. He wouldn't even *give* me the controls. I never really grew to like the game for some reason.

Ooooo-eeeee-oooooo...

Fast forward in time (did you see the edges of the page go all wibbly there for a second?) and *Sensible Soccer* appears. The view is not-quite-top-down, it shows more of the pitch, the ball moves about within the view rather than staying almost exactly mid-screen all the time, and the straight top-down viewed football game is no more.

Kick Off has struggled ever since. They've tried side-on views, they've tried all sorts, really, but no one wants to know. Everyone else has motion capturing nowadays – whether you actually want it or not. Strangely enough, the original version still has its devotees, but these people are viewed in much the same way as those who recondition penny-farthings, and ride about on them shouting "Mountain bikes? Twenty-one gears and a comfortable seat? Who needs *that?* Give me a bike with *no* gears, that's really difficult to get *onto*, and when you do your calves burst, and the saddle gives you haemorrhoids that are the size of *beach* balls, *any* day. Hah!" (People like that always litter their sentences with italics.) All the mountain bikers then just laugh up their sleeves and bounce about on their lovely £3000-worth of suspension-tastic frames.

You don't need to memorise loads and loads of button presses, and the goalkeepers aren't idiots.

(Above) The national hokey-kokey display team went through their paces. (Above right) Ah, who could forget that magical summer... Denmark beating Germany in the European Championships. (Top right) The Arsenal defenders dealt with the threat the only way they knew how – by charging ineffectually up the pitch to get the offside.

(Left) Have you heard about Arsene Wenger? He keeps trying to put Seaman in the reserves... (Above) The linesman thought if he looked macho, the crowd would look at him and not at those show-off players...

Fast forward again and it's today – half past nine in the morning, to be exact. And *Kick Off 97* is now here. It's motion captured and uses the obligatory 'real' footballers that do so much to make us buy a game. In this case, though, they're Arsenal footballers. (Insert boring game joke of your choice here.) And really, it's all right.

Good things

Yes, it's motion captured but, amazingly, it plays very quickly – certainly quicker than either of its main competitors (*FIFA* and *Actua*) on my P90. For a motion captured effort, there's no sense that the game has been fitted around the motion capturing, rather than vice versa – well, not often. To get it running quickly, I used a maximum installation, with 124Mb of hard disk space. Even the minimal installation uses 45 meg. Call me old fashioned, but 124 meg for a footie game?

Other good points include the fact that you don't need to memorise loads and loads of button presses (as you do with *FIFA*) and the goalkeepers aren't idiots (like *Actua/Euro 96*). There are also shitloads of options in the gameplay – from the different types of tournaments possible and the number of customisable ones you can devise. You can also create and edit your own Dream Team and include them in a customised competition of your choice. You can even pick the referees and the pitch pattern, which should please Bob Flowerdew fans. There's a nice practice facility that lets you work on everything from taking a free kick and penalties, to dribbling and shooting. One really handy touch is that you see the player stats as you go to make a substitution, management game style. There are more teams available – both nationally and at club level – than any other game, apart maybe from *Sensible World Of Soccer.*

Less good things

There are, however, a few irritating things and one or two faults. On the irritating front there are the aforementioned teams – it's all very well having the right players, but the ratings and default choices are crap. Few people would have Ronaldo and Stoichkov not in the starting Barcelona side, for example. Then there are the team strips: not only are some of them just wrong, but occasionally two different sides come on with the same coloured shirts (like Chelsea and Leicester). The penalty taking feature doesn't seem to work properly, and when you're playing out of the screen, the view doesn't zoom back enough to show you the goal to aim your penalty. The commentary isn't exactly free flowing, and it gives the wrong information sometimes: in a two-player game, my Utrecht side got a penalty against England and the commentary said England had the penalty. Oh, and the offside rule is a bit crap, and the back-pass rule is non-existent.

Overall, it's pretty good for fast-paced action. It's very playable, especially if you get a two-player Gravis Grip set-up, when it's the fastest action on the PC. Admittedly, in one-player mode the computer teams are a bit tricky – but that's better than being too easy. And, by the way, nostalgia freaks can play it top-down. Although why they'd want to...

Deliberately contravening FIFA rule 11.4.3.6, Wayne evacuated his bowels in the centre circle.

Jim Rosenthal

I can't remember the last time that I heard Jim Rosenthal doing a proper sports commentary. I just remember him standing next to some athletes at meetings in exotic Gateshead asking really stupid questions such as: "So, Gregory, your cartilage was ruptured as you came round the last bend and also your kneecap flew out and killed your mother as she stood in the stand, and she'd travelled all the way from Arkansas to be here with the money she should have used to pay for a hip replacement – how d'you feel at the moment?"

Hearing him commentate is a bit weird, to tell you the truth. You don't really recognise his voice, because it's not doing what it normally does – that is saying really stupid things for a few seconds so you won't switch off before they can start the ads on Late Night European Semi-Professional Football Extra. After a while, it starts to nag at you. Who's that talking in the background while you're trying to play your footie game? Then it hits you. It's Alan Partridge.

In Perspective

Although it runs at a speed its two main competitors can only dream about, it has a few minor faults that count against it. Whilst they're not serious, you just can't help thinking that they could at least have got Ian Wright in the box instead of taking corners, considering they used him with their motion capture. Annoying rather than disastrous.

FIFA Soccer 97

Euro 96/Actua Soccer

Kick Off 97

Sensible Soccer

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb
Processor: Pentium recommended
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, pad, mouse

Direct Input

Score

Fast, playable, and well worth a look if you don't mind the odd flaw.

85

Price: £39.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: Maxis
Telephone: 0171 505 1500

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EJECT ENEMY PLAYERS FROM THEIR HAWC	✓	✗	✗
CROSS-TALK WITH YOUR WINGMAN	✓	✗	✗
MISSILE-CAM	✓	✗	✗
USER GUIDED MISSILE	✓	✗	✗
REAL-TIME DAMAGE DISPLAY	✓	✗	✗
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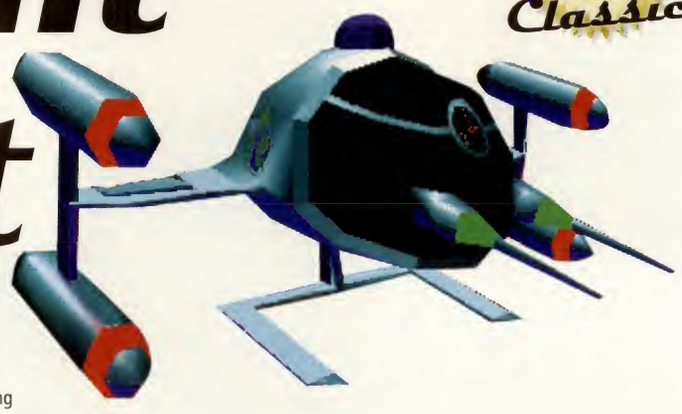
Darklight Conflict



"I'm sorry," pleaded Paul Presley when we asked, "but there's just no way I can come up with an intro joke around the words *Darklight Conflict*. It just isn't possible!" He was right too.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF DARKLIGHT Conflict began with a guessing game. "Guess what kind of game it is, go on," said Darklight's project manager. He started it up and showed me the intro sequence: a beautifully-rendered animation sequence, depicting several F-14 fighters launching from an aircraft carrier and dogfighting with some unnamed enemy planes.

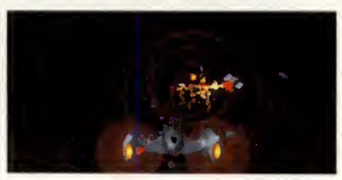
"A point-and-click adventure surrounding the effect of Indo-China's influence over the yoghurt-producing nations during the 1800s?" I replied, as on the ball as ever. As it turns out, I wasn't far off. *Darklight Conflict* is the kind of space-based combat simulator that games like *Wing Commander* and *Privateer* hope to become when they grow up. *(So you were miles away in fact? – Ed.)*

Pineal glands

The reason a space-based combat game starts with a *Top Gun*-style intro is that just before it ends, one of the Hamerikan pilots is abducted by an alien craft. In a kind of intergalactic version of a student exchange programme, the pilot has been taken from his home planet and thrust headlong into a huge alien war, fighting for a race known as the Reptons and helping them defend against the might of the evil Ovons (by the way, looking at the shape of the ships in the game, you would do well to think of the Reptons as giant frogs and the Ovons as huge killer ducks).

Apparently, these two races have actually been at it for aeons. (At a space dinner party, the Repton ambassador once called the Ovon leader a bit of a girl and the whole thing just ballooned from there, or somthing like that.) The reason they've decided to start using human pilots in their battles is that, having advanced the technological levels of their weapons as far as they possibly can, they now want to try and gain the element of surprise by using pilots who use unfamiliar tactics.

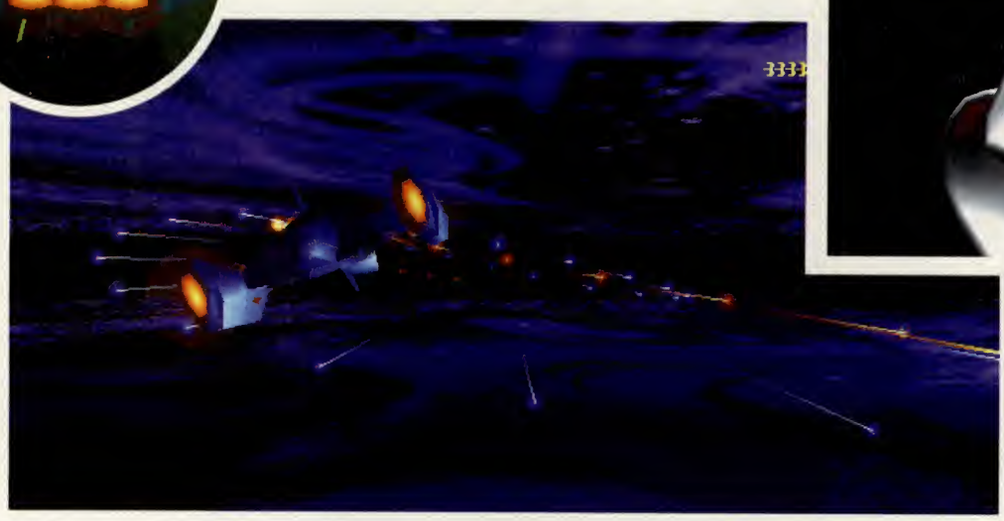
But here's the really clever bit. The human pilot? That's you that is. I knew you'd be surprised.

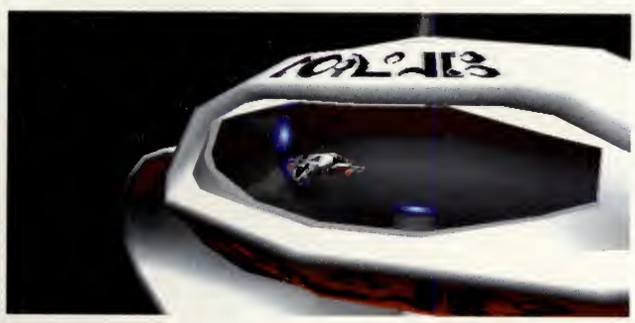


(Top) Hah ha! Yes! Now that's what I call an explosion. Thank God for particle graphic systems.
(Above) Ah. Whoops.

Eye candy

When you start playing *Darklight*, it grabs your eyeballs with both hands, pulls them out of their sockets, gives them a thorough hammering and then puts them back completely frazzled and burnt out. The graphics are that good. Every time I've played it in the office people walking past have said things such as: "Christ, look at that, that's impressive", and "Gadzooks, thou art playing me for a simpleton





(Above) Leaving a hanger bay. You see, most games would be doing this in FMV, but *Darklight*...
(Left) Travelling through Hyperspace. Remember, stay clear of the blue ones and pick up the red. Nothing in this game for a blast in the head.

Hyperspace

Space, as we all know, is huge. Bloody huge. The trouble with trying to program a 3D real-time simulation of space is that there's an awful lot of it to cover. However, cover it you must, so you do what any self-respecting games designer would do: you cheat and make up some kind of special distance-covering device. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to hyperspace.

To get from one mission point to the next you need to fly your ship through a Hyperspace Portal (a giant, whirling, vaguely Star Of David-shaped gateway). A quick little camera cutaway later and you're swooping through the strange swirling void that allows you to cut across vast empty spaces in an instant and get straight into the parts of the universe that are trying to kill you.

One of the handier features of Hyperspace (other than the ability to make anyone watching start quoting lines from *2001* – "My god, it's full of stars!") is that it's full of, um, energy things. As you hurtle through the infinite boundaries of space, you can add to your ship's ever-dwindling energy reserves by picking up as many orange, uh, things as possible before you exit. However, run into any blue, er, things and you'll lose energy.

You might think it all sounds a bit like a game from *The Crystal Maze* or something, and for the want of a bald-headed weirdo or faded ex-punk desperate for work, it would be

to expect me to believe those are real" and "What are the in-game graphics like?"

The thing is, they *are* the in-game graphics. Throughout, Rage have aimed to make all the presentation screens, mission briefings, equipment lists – and even the credits screen – use the same graphics as in the playable segments. The idea is to try and avoid the age-old problem of making things look far too nice before the game starts and then disappointing when you take off. The trouble is, to pull this off, the in-game graphics need to be pretty damn smart. And they are.

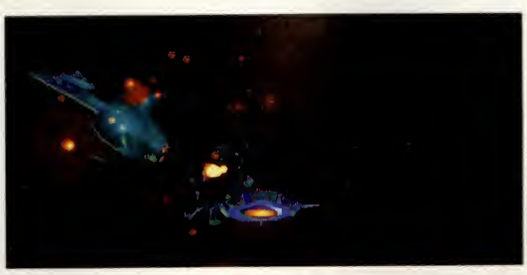
To help keep the speed up throughout, each object loses detail the further away it is. However, to maintain this quality in every part of the game, even the far-off graphics are superior to the sort of thing we were seeing in similar games not so long ago.

Oi, gameplay!

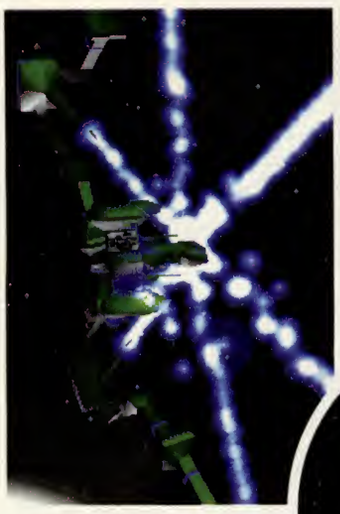
Yeah, yeah. Graphics be damned if the game doesn't play, as my wizened old grandmother used to say before she was carted off to the Cosy Pines Sanatorium For The Criminally Deranged. This is one of those arguments that falls into what *Late Show* reviewers like to call a 'grey area' when you start dealing with 3D action games. For me, the more real something looks and behaves, the better the atmosphere it can create and the more you feel like playing it.

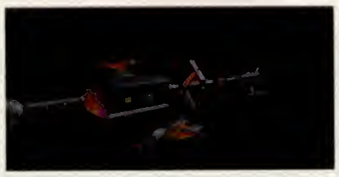
Darklight isn't just a case of the graphics looking good and nothing else. The advanced systems Rage have used mean that when you blow something up, it explodes with terrifying realism. The particle explosions look great and feel real. The frame rate has been kept high enough to make sure you ▶

It's an arcade action game. Plain and simple. Grade A quality gaming fun.

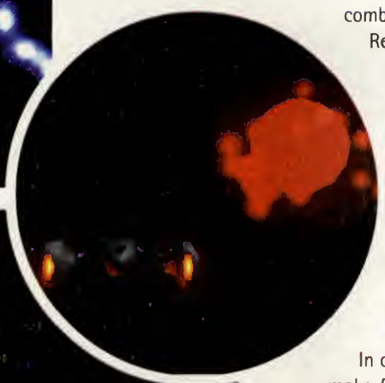


The background story in pictures: US Navy goes to war against drug barons/Middle East terrorists/Vietnam/Weston-Super-Mare (make your own choice). Hot-shot pilot proves he's got balls bigger than his plane's undercarriage. Nearby aliens take an interest and decide to zap him right out of the cockpit to fight for them.





(Left) Entering a Hyperspace portal. *(Short and to the point. I like it – Ed.)* (Above) Mercy me, that's a big ship. (Below) Okay, got to stop this comet before it strays too close to my home base, then it's time for a cup o' PG.



never think that your PC has suddenly turned into a 386SX by mistake. And I mean never. I've been playing all sorts of missions that involve huge numbers of ships, missiles and other alien thingies flying about at one time, but I've yet to encounter any form of spasmodic jerking of any kind (except in my own frail bones. Where are my pills?).

But what do you do?

The story takes place over 50 or so missions. Unlike other more 'worthy' space combat games (you know who you are), *Darklight* isn't trying to be a mighty space epic starring every B-list Hollywood reject in the book and directed by jumped-up graphic artists. It's an arcade action game. Plain and simple. It gives you the requisite intro animation, the requisite final animation at the end and nothing except Grade A quality gaming fun and joy in between.

You start with a handful of training scenarios, designed to get you used to the different aspects of space combat, and then you're thrown straight into the Repton/Ovon war. This involves simple dogfights, base defending, asteroid clearing, bombing runs and ore mining.

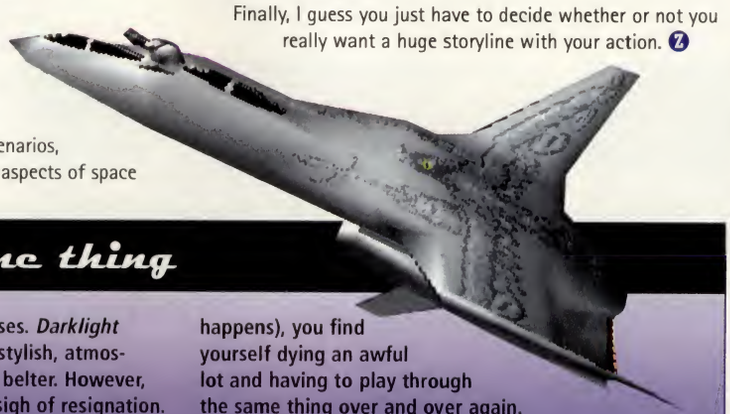
Although the mission structure is pretty rigid (fail a mission and you have to do it again until you get it right), there's quite a bit of variety in the overall game. Maybe not quite enough for some people, but it should keep most people interested right through until the end.

Where's Mark?

In one sense, it's that lack of pretension that helps make *Darklight Conflict* as playable as it is. Rage must have set out to make a damn playable game and that's exactly what they've managed to do. It wouldn't have hurt it to have a little bit more weight, but it doesn't suffer for it. Do you follow? I hope so.

The underlying truth is simply that *Darklight Conflict* is as playable as any space combat engine that has ever existed. It's easily on a par with the old *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* games, it's easily better than the somewhat flat *Wing Commander* engine, and it's much smoother and nicer than *Privateer*.

Finally, I guess you just have to decide whether or not you really want a huge storyline with your action.



There's just one thing

Okay, let's not beat around the houses. *Darklight Conflict* is a great game. Beautiful, stylish, atmospheric, very playable – an all-round belter. However, I have one minor grumble, a slight sigh of resignation. A whisper of regret even. I can't help but feel that Rage are ever so slightly shooting themselves in the foot by limiting the game to a mere arcade-style action fest: 50 missions sounds like a lot but, because they're all played in a linear style, once you've gone through them (which, admittedly, will take a fair amount of time), there's little to want to make you go back (which I suppose is where the multi-player patch comes in. I'm countering my own points here. Top journalism Presley <mutter>).

Plus, when the missions start getting really difficult (round about the first non-training one as it happens), you find yourself dying an awful lot and having to play through the same thing over and over again. The harder ones do start to get a little annoying after a while and you wish that there was some kind of story structure to allow you to go down different paths every now and then. Repetitive brain injury, I call it.

I mean, it's a minor thing really. Hardly worth blaming the game, since that's not what it was setting out to do. However, the boys at Rage would be fools unto themselves not to think about a sequel with an engine this powerful. The game beats the pants off the game bits in things like *Privateer*, it's crying out for something meaty to go around it.

In Perspective

A simply stunning game engine is what makes *Darklight* so good. The Origin titles have more story to them, but the closest game engines are the ones used in *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter*. Both are looking somewhat older now, but do have that certain *Star Wars* something about them. Ultimately, you pays your money

Darklight Conflict

X-Wing

TIE Fighter

Privateer 2

Wing Commander IV

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommende

Processor: Pentium 90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard

Score

The best space combat engine bar none.

92

Price: £34.99

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Puzzle Bobble

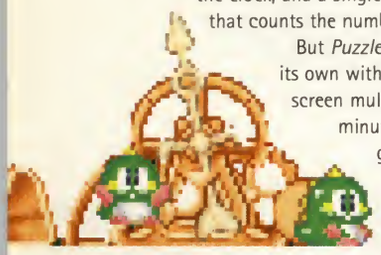
Paul Mallinson played *Puzzle Bobble* for six hours straight, and didn't blink once.

PC ZONE Classic

PUZZLE BOBBLE IS ONE OF THOSE GAMES that, like Tetris, is incredibly simple to play, completely fan-fecking-tastically addictive and will swallow every moment of your waking life.

Playing the game is moronically easy. It's simply a case of shooting coloured bubbles up the screen into a mass of other bubbles. Get three or more of the same colour touching and they disappear – the aim being to clear the screen by popping every single bubble, earning points as you go.

There are variations on the theme, including a straightforward single-player game, which is played against the clock, and a single-player Challenge mode that counts the number of bubbles popped.



But *Puzzle Bobble* really comes into its own with the network and split-screen multi-player options. Within minutes of starting a two-player game, both sides will begin cursing loudly when mistakes are made. As the pace of the game increases, so does the tirade of foul and abrasive language. This, in my book, is the sign of a really good game: if mistakes are made, you know there's no one to blame but yourself. Three or four missed bubbles in a row and the room in which you're playing will suddenly go all quiet as the venomous, self-abusive stream of expletives reaches new and dizzying heights. There are few games that are capable of reducing grown men to horrible, disgusting animal – *Quake* is one such game and *Puzzle Bobble* is another.

So gather some friends, bang on *Puzzle Bobble* and I can guarantee that you'll be playing, and cussin', all night.

The aforementioned single-player modes cannot be dismissed either. I've been playing *Puzzle Bobble* all week (when I should've been working) and I've been racking up extremely high scores, and gathering an impressive reservoir of drool on my sagging bottom lip.

"Ready... go!" The voices in my head say it all the time.

It's fair to say that, initially, this latest Bub and Bob vehicle (Bub and Bob, by the way, are the two cute dinosaur characters that host the game) doesn't seem to have really progressed in any way from the 'good old days' of *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*, but even after just a short period of time playing *Puzzle Bobble* it becomes apparent that this frighteningly engrossing and brilliantly presented 'mind sponge' of a sequel is definitely their best outing yet. That old and reliable cliché that the simplest games are always the best certainly applies in this instance.

Puzzle Bobble is perfect. No one has any reason not to buy it, especially at this price.

Under three seconds is possible too...

How to win at Puzzle Bobble

No one's gonna get anywhere popping three bubbles at a time. Taking out a row of same-coloured bubbles at the top of the screen will knock off all those below it if, of course, they're not in contact with the side walls, or other, different-coloured bubbles. Capiche?

1. A baby's arm's worth of bubbles attached to these blues at the top.

2. Take out the blues and the rest fall to their doom.

In Perspective

Both *Baku Baku Animal* and *Tetris* are worthy of the 'Classic' tag, but in my book, *Puzzle Bobble* is top dog. *Gubble* (see page117) really isn't anything to write home about. In fact, I'd say Puzzle Bobble is my favourite puzzle game of all time. Period.

Baku Baku Animal

Tetris

Puzzle Bobble

Gubble

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)
Processor: P60
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick/pad
Note: Windows 95 only

Score

Perfectly simple, simply perfect.

Price: £19.99
Release date: March
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171 258 3791
Website: www.gtinteractive.com

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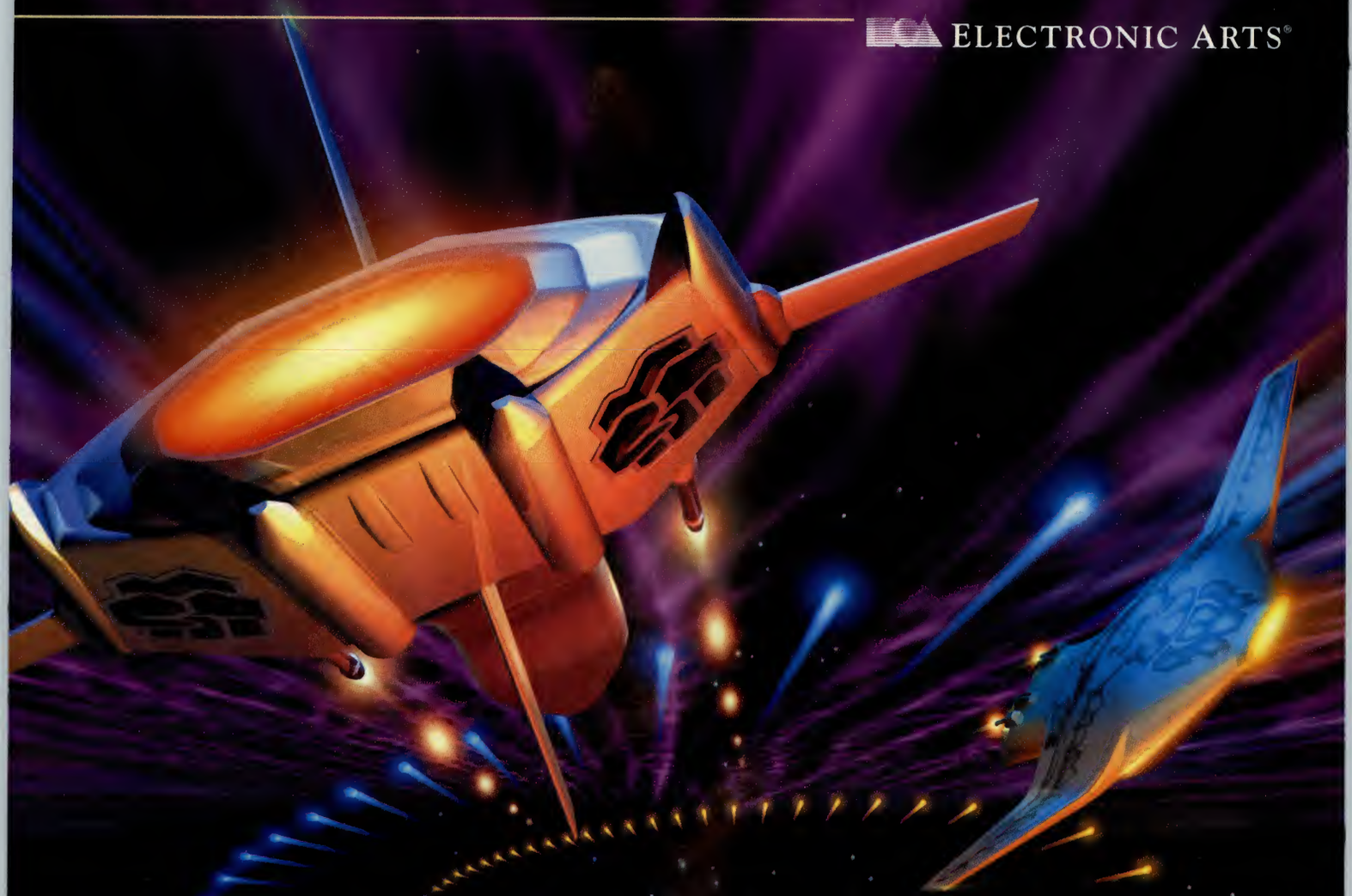

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Trophy Bass 2

"Hmmm," thought Culky as he stared at the latest fishing sim box from Sierra. It wasn't the title that confused him, it was the little blue sticker on the side saying 'Full English Version'.

WELL NOW, HAVING REVIEWED AND thoroughly enjoyed Trophy Bass 1, I can tell you for a fact that any fishermen who live south of Carolina, USA, who like tipping fishy sim freaks in this game, do not communicate in what we would call Her Majesty's Lingo. This is Hillbilly land. The locals may know a thing or two about bass, but I believe that's all they know about, apart from counting chickens.

And there's about six of them (and one chick) dying to tell you how to hook a haddock. God was a bit low on his stock of eyebrows when he made Carolina, and they were definitely in short supply on the FMVs here too. No one seemed to have a pair.

Anyway, enough about the Southerners, and into the lake. The *Trophy Bass* engine is identical to the first edition, thank goodness, because this is the best fishing sim to date.

A number of options are available, from a quickie down by the water, to a battle with computer simulated pros, on to a head-to-head version with 'friends' on the Net. It is with this modem and network play that *Trophy Bass 2* really makes a departure from its younger brother or 'fry'.

Starting with a given lake (now from a choice of ten real ones), on a quick fish you can navigate your boat over the entire water – except when you try to go over land in a dingy, when a balloon has an annoying habit of popping up to restrain you by saying: "You cannot sail over dry land." Really? You mean I can't go down Oxford street in narrow boat type of thing? Aawh.

But when you settle down and cast in your little spot (all fishermen have their little spot), the fish look, move and feel very realistically – sometimes they bite, sometimes they don't – just like the real thing.

Waited half an hour and still no a bite? No problem – just delve into the tackle box son, and pull out a bigger lure, and don't forget to put some 'sniffy' on – that's Rotten Fish oil spray. Apparently, the pros reckon it turns the fish wild.

Your tackle box enables rod, line, lure and cast-style selections in one window, which is a vast improvement over *Trophy Bass 1*. Changing a lure and so on may increase the chance of a bite, or may not, and this is what makes *Trophy Bass 2* so pleasing – it's so real and unpredictable. When you do get a bite it's important to strike at the right time to hook the fish good and Kentucky, before you try to reel it in. This sometimes takes up to half an hour and feels like a proper fight. Just like down the boozer.

Don't worry if you know nothing about fishing. A casual gamer will enjoy *Trophy Bass 2*. It's very easy to learn in this game, just by listening to the FMV tips – I learnt more about how to catch fish than in the whole ten years I've spent piddling about in the river Mole, getting cold and wet, cursing and swearing at every branch, twig or weed that got anywhere near my tangled excuse for tackle. Fishing reels snarl-ups encourage hitherto unknown combinations of every curse and swear know to man. Thankfully this is eliminated in *Trophy Bass 2*.

When you've got the hang of how to strike and fight the fish with the mouse, you're well prepared for a tournament with the big boys (you'll see them in the intro demo, lowering their big hunky boats into the water). Nothing less than a 200hp V6 engine will do for these Cajun Coddlers. The tournament rules are pretty tough, so keep an eye on the clock and the new 'time remaining window', because you'll be penalised for late weigh-in.

After mastering the tournament, you're ready to go for Netplay to show off your angling skills, but remember your foe will see where you like to fish from, and race you there – I can see a fight on the line!

Sod the river Mole – *Trophy Bass 2* is entirely my pleasure again ma'am.

(Top) Look – no eyebrows!
(Centre) Navigate each lake to find your 'special' spot.
(Bottom) The fish move and swim very nicely thank you ma'am.

In Perspective

There's little that you can really compare *Trophy Bass 2* to – it's nice to be able to fish more lakes, and Netplay is a great pl too. *TNN Tournament* is very different – it's not a sim, but more of an arcade game. Here's to *Trophy Bass 3*.

TNN Tournament

Trophy Bass 1

Trophy Bass 2

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse, joystick
Note: Windows 3.1/Windows 95 required

Score

A nice fish – and no tray of maggots in the fridge.

84

Price: £29.99
Release date: Out now
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Telephone: 0118 9209100
Website: www.sierra/online.co.uk

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PC Zone 92% — "The in game graphics have to be seen to be believed".

PC Review 8 out of 10 — "The atmosphere of Blade Runner and the action of Elite underpin this top-drawer blaster".

PC Format 86% — "Do we recommend it? Of course we bloody do!"

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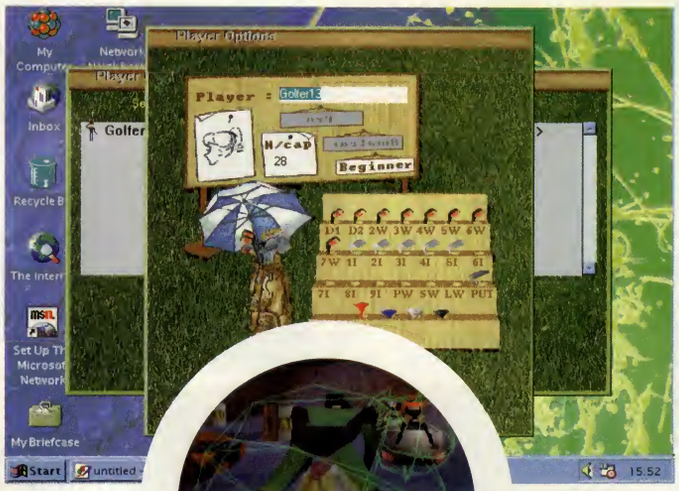
Review ZONE Extra!

Okay, so we didn't have enough room to review every game in meticulous detail. Whattaya gonna do about it? Go stuff yourself with Easter eggs, you fat, lardy oik you!



SCORCHER

There's nothing especially remarkable about Scavenger's futuristic racing game, but that's not to say that there's nothing to recommend it.

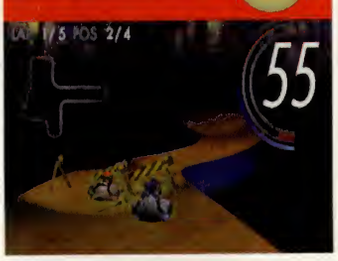
The idea of racing a huge atlasphere around a roller-coaster ride of a track with more dips, tight turns and twists than the whole of Pan's People is a novel slant that hasn't been seen before, and the visuals alone make it a worthwhile experience.

Scorcher is a very good-looking game, although the altlasphere things take a little getting used to (they sometimes don't go where you expect - but then who knows what one of these things handles like apart from Wolf, Lightning, Saracen and Co?). You get a good sensation of speed as they bounce around the track, especially through the high-banked corners. Scavenger have done their best to make the six tracks as varied as possible by dropping in some interesting obstacles, but ultimately it's all just a too samey and this is where *Scorcher* falls down. The lack of a multi-player mode and the fact that it's so damn hard to stay on the track (the checkpoint times are on the mean side, so you'll be forced to use the practice mode if you want to get anywhere) doesn't help matters, but at least it keeps you at it.

For a quick speed hit, it's ideal, but when you play it for any length of time it starts to lose its appeal, for all its graphical splendour and speed. *DM*

Publisher: GT Interactive
Price: £39.95
Tel: 0171 258 3791

77



Just like Katayama you'll find that it's bloody hard to stay on the track, let alone win a race.

(Top) ***SimGolf*** **– it's a Windows game, innit? (Above) Remember to hold your breath when you slipstream the bloke in front just in case he farts.**

SIMGOLF

Everyone with a golf game in the pipeline seems to have suddenly latched upon this 'unique' and 'revolutionary' new mouse-drag interface, and they're all claiming to be the first to use it. Well, Maxis are actually the first to use it, and they've managed to incorporate a rather neat course designer/editor into their golf game too.

It's painstakingly slow to use, but the *SimGolf*'s Course Architect does allow you to have complete control over what goes where and builds up a very detailed course. Despite the comparative crudity of the graphics, the screen update is slow, and this, ▶

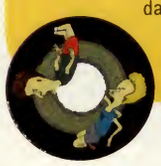
PC Zone recommends

BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD: SCREEN WRECKERS

YET MORE MTV MADCAP HUMOUR FROM THE gruesome twosome with bad haircuts and 'attitood'. This isn't really a screensaver but, as the title suggests, it's a screen wrecker designed to let you blow off some steam with Beavis and Butt-Head and unwind as you destroy, deface and completely obliterate your screen with the help of two of the world's greatest sofa slobs.

It's nothing too clever. Essentially, it's a collection of very basic games that rely on you moving your cursor around the screen in various guises in order to cause as much merriment and mirth for you and your surrounding colleagues as possible. To this extent it works - sort of.

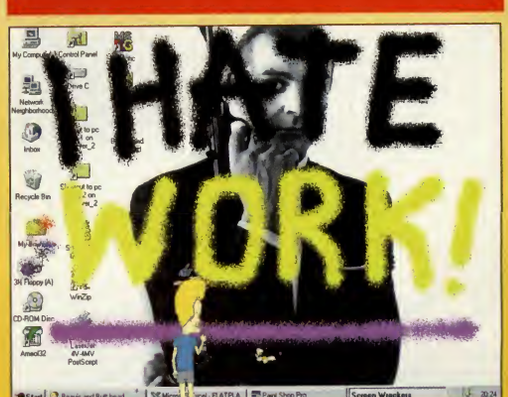
Some of the games, although very simple, are very addictive. Not because they're particularly involving or challenging, but because the accompanying sound effects and animations are totally over the top in that special B&B way. If you like Beavis & Butt-Head, I defy you not to explode into fits of laughter when you play the 'Cornholio' game. It's just so stupid, it's fantastic. Other 'games' allow you to deface your screen and generally run amuck over your work, with no permanent damage, which is a handy outlet to have when you're buried deep within Excel.



This little package (huh, huh) does exactly what it sets out to do: it gives you a bit of a break and a much-needed laugh while you're anchored in front of your PC. Like it says on the box, it's probably the best two-handed stress reliever in the world. *JW*

PC ZONE Recommended

Publisher: VIE/MTV
Price: £9.99
Tel: 0171 368 2255



combined with the length of time it takes to build up a course, means that you'll be pushed to design a single hole, let alone a whole course in anything under a few hours. For this reason, maybe Maxis should have provided more basic courses ready for modification, although the two 'real-life' courses, Rancho La Quinta and The Prince in Kuai can be modified to suit your requirements relatively speedily.

At first, the Maxis MouseSwing seems a little bit awkward to use, although after a few minutes' practice you can't help thinking that it's actually quite forgiving. Although it gives you the sensation of more control, it's not exactly sensitive to subtle changes in your wrist action and the ball does tend to end up in the same spot with anything but a wildly different stroke. Despite this, it is possible to execute wildly sliced and hooked shots and bend the ball around trees and the like with comparative ease (maybe someone should incorporate this interface into a football game for set pieces and corners), and at least it's more involving than the standard click-click-click power bar interface, which is also available.

Graphically, *SimGolf* just doesn't compare with the lushness of *PGA* or *Links LS*, but then you don't have a problem with slow screen re-fresh rates. Overall, it's a comprehensive and impressive package that's easy to use and fun to play, if a little on the basic side. *JW*

Publisher: Maxis
Price: £40
Tel: 0171 505 1500

78

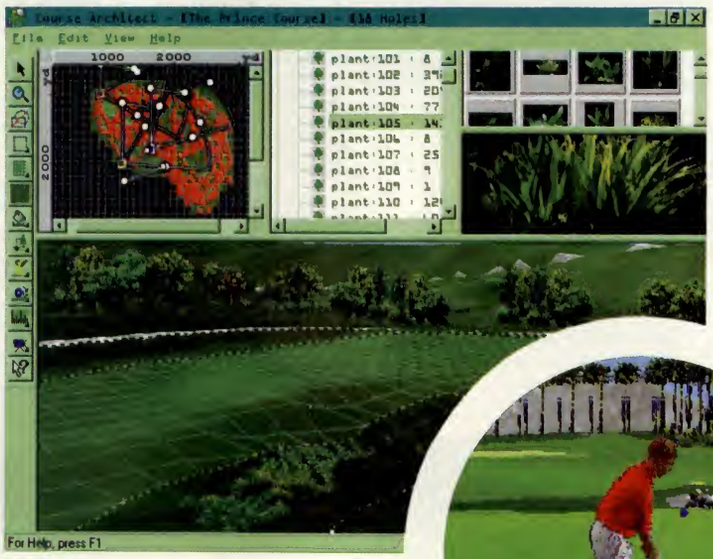
Although it's pretty in the visual department, *Gubble* doesn't offer the same long-term appeal as the excellent *Puzzle Bobble*.

GUBBLE

The thing with puzzle games is that they must grab you, infuriate you and drive you completely up the wall if they're to be deemed any good. Despite being pretty sparse in the old graphics department, *Gubble* manages to be very annoying and at the same time exceedingly addictive, but it's sadly lacking in long-term appeal.

The object of the game is to guide Gubble through different 'cities', pushing, moving and collecting various objects and items (nails and screws seem to be favourites here) without running into the bad guys.

As with all good puzzle games, *Gubble* is very simple to play but devilishly tricky to master. It's fun for a while, but with a brief this simple it was never going to be fun for very long, and after just a few hours it stops being enjoyable and becomes plain infuriating. Die-hard puzzle addicts may find it worthwhile, just as your kid brother might find it distracting until he discovers what real PC games are all about.



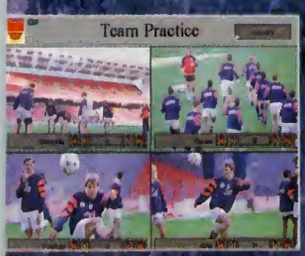
The new mouse-drag swing system is a nice idea, but you still don't feel as though you're in control of what's going on on-screen. The courses are pretty detailed and graphically nice enough, but the down-side of this is that it takes about a zillion years to design a single hole, let alone a whole bloody course. Still, you can always alter existing ones.

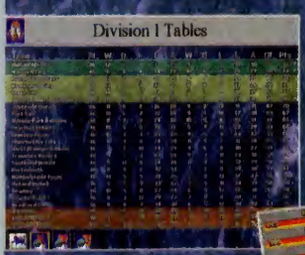
If you want an accessible puzzle game for your PC then look no further than our review of *Puzzle Bobble* on page 112. It's got a brilliant two-player option and is totally fab. *Gubble*, on the other hand, hasn't and isn't. *JD*

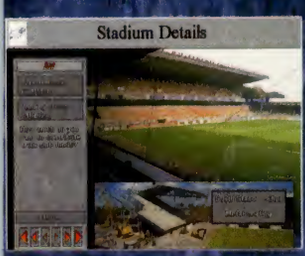
Publisher: Actual Entertainment
Price: £24.95
Tel: 0181 974 6766

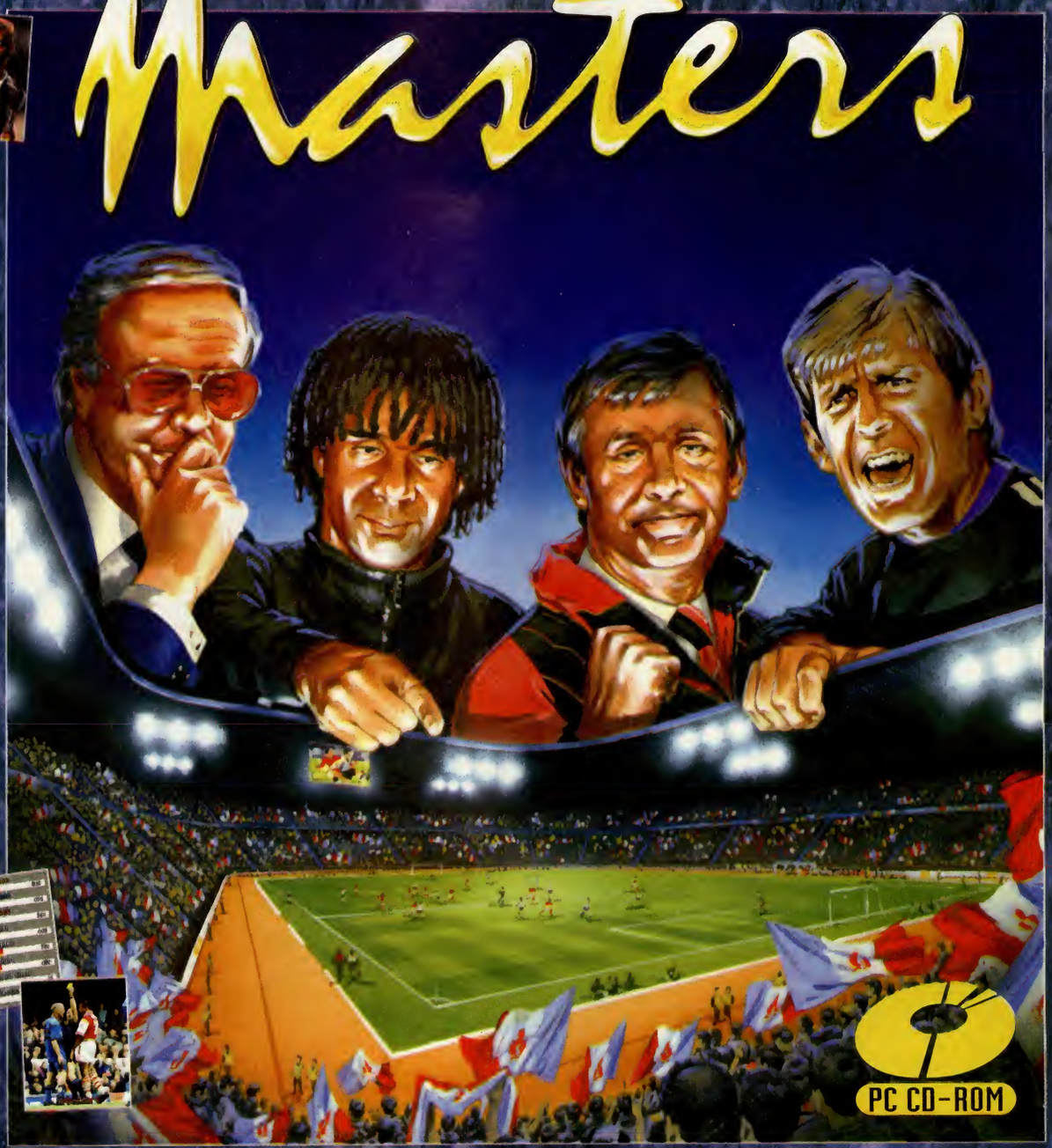
68

Football Masters









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Connecting...

Connected

Disconnecting...

Disconnected

ZONE On-Line

Romero's Website

This month: win a poisonous lead figurine, losing your life to *Diablo*, and why Southampton is the networking gaming capital of the UK (sort of).

GOOD QUAKE PLAYERS fall into two simple categories, two genepools if you like. Those who reckon themselves and those who don't. Often you can take a slide rule to their genitals to find out which pigeonhole they fall into. Take John Romero for example. He came up with the concept for *Doom* (if 'running around a maze shooting things' is a concept). He worked on *Quake* for iD sofware, made a packet, and then whipped off out of it to form his own company, Ion Storm. Mandate: to do perverse things to the *Quake* engine. Now, his company has been signed to a publisher called EIDOS for a cool $10 million. Nice work if you can get it.

So what does he do with his time now? Construct levels? Busy himself with designing the intricacies of his forthcoming RPG game? Nah mate. He plays *Quake*. In fact, he'll play *Quake* against anyone who'll reckons themselves. Check out the official Ion Storm website (http://www.ionstorm.com/). He's currently running a 'who can finish a *Quake* level faster than me' compo. The level is E2M5 ("The Wizard's Manse"). All you have to do is get from start point to exit in the fastest time and you'll win yourself an official lead Space Marine figurine. Woo. Yeah. This is, apparently, the first of many challenges which will be appearing over the next few months. The record time thus far is 41 seconds. If you reckon yourself at *Quake*, or don't have a slide rule, you should check it out.

David McCandless

Check out http://www.ionstorm.com/chaos/challenge/e2m5/index.html for the latest Romero challenges.

battle.net

Yes, you possess a copy of *Diablo*. Yes, you possess an Internet account and a reputable modem. Yes, you can play against Americans, but can you play with them? Raza Toosy explains how and, more importantly, why.

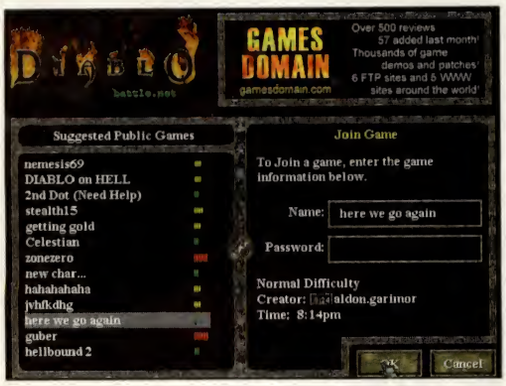
Let us talk about fantasy. Two images should spring to mind. One of spooky dungeons and evil wizards and the other of a beautiful babe walking along a tropical beach at sunset, sprays of the ocean tide garnishing her glistening perfectly formed body... ahh. Unfortunately for some, *Diablo* is of the former ilk, but fortunately for others, it is almost entirely action-based. With fights. And combat. And weaponry. And killing. And disembowelling. Despite this, however, it's the only multi-player game where everyone finishes with a warm co-operative feeling in their bellies.

For the uninitiated, *Diablo* is a graphically enhanced, 3D isometric RPG. Although it has the usual clichéd swords, sorcery and heroes, it's the levels which really stand out. They're randomly generated. From the layout of the map to the creatures, to the scrolls and spellbooks, to the items and magic paraphernalia. Your character is the only fixed constant in a world of variables. And it's this randomness which is the key to both *Diablo's* longevity and to *Battle.net's* popularity.

Battle.net – say, what?

Simply put, *Battle.net* is a front end for playing *Diablo* multi-play on the Internet. Servers are dotted around the planet to which users log onto and play their games. This is invisible to you of course. You simply connect via Windows 95 to your friendly neighbourhood Internet Service Provider, then while still on-line, run *Diablo*, specify 'Multi-play' and then 'Battle.net'. As quickly as you can say, "this is going to suck my money dry, destroy my social life and make me go to work in plate mail and a big shiny axe", you are greeted with the main *Battle.net* chat channel. From here you can talk to others, join other channels, create a game to play or join an existing game. It's so easy even Vanessa Feltz could manage it.

If you're familiar with *QuakeWorld*, you'll be happy here. You want to choose the lowest 'ping' game (a ping is the time it takes for your modem to bounce a signal to a server and back again). Unlike *Quake*, where you're limited to a small circle within your local area, you can often have a decent game of *Diablo* with most of America and ▶

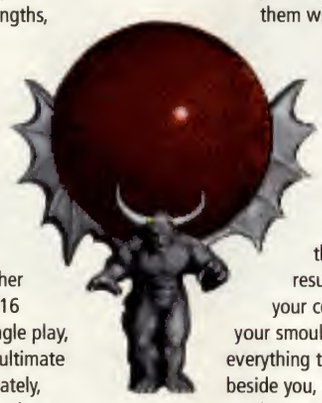


If you play the game two hours a night, taking into account current BT discounts, it'll probably set you back around £40 per month for the phone bill alone.

beyond. We've had individual games graced by one guy from California, one from New York and another from Japan(!) – the technology is that good. The bars beside each game indicate how smooth the game will be, from one green bar for silky smooth to six red bars for unplayable.

1 potato, 2 potato...3...4

Playing with others makes you realise what *Diablo* was designed for. It's a multi-player game, plain and simple. You're supposed to gang up on monsters, complement one character's weakness with the other's strengths, and fight over magical items strewn over monsters' rotting carcasses. In short, you're encouraged to betray the one commandment of multi-playing – never play co-operative.



You start off each game in town and can access each of the four different levels from here: the dungeons, the catacombs, the caves and hell. Each level offers a different style environment and is further divided into four sub-levels, making a total of 16 which can be explored in one game. Unlike single play, only four quests are available to you with the ultimate goal being to destroy Diablo himself. Unfortunately, interaction with your surroundings is very limited: you can shatter barrels, use shrines and bookcases and maybe pull the occasional lever. However, the creatures themselves are beautifully animated. Blizzard claim to have over 100, but in fact there are only about 20 with different colours and attributes to make up the numbers. There is also an automap view, but in multi-play mode you can't see your partners – so it can be tedious if you lose each other.

As killing simply involves casting a spell or clicking as quickly as possible, games can end up as boring 'click and kill' affairs. So to get the full huggies feel out of the game, you have to play as hard a level as possible for your character. As there are three difficulties (normal, nightmare and hell) and four incrementally harder environments, it's quite possible to find a level on the edge of your combating skills. It becomes a totally different game when you're not too sure whether you'll make it past the next corridor.

Sometimes, you may end up in a game with players of a lower level where you take on the role of benevolent guardian, shepherding your flock through harder levels (frazzle them with lightning if they get too cocky). Other times however, especially at the start of your *Battle.net* career, you'll find yourself playing with gods. Just keep quiet, sit and admire them as they cleave passages through hordes of demons in hell. Pander to their egos a little with compliments, or death may be forthcoming.

Inevitably, death happens in *Battle.net* as there's no save game. However, scrolls of resurrection can be bought and found which your comrades-in-arms can use to resuscitate your smouldering corpse. If you're slain by monsters, everything that you're wearing is tossed on the floor beside you, so a careful vetting procedure of your co-combatants may be sensible. If your 'chums' end up being a bunch of tea-leaves, you can opt to restart in town, albeit with a little permanent loss to your health.

A whole world is open to you and because of its unpredictability you'll find yourself wondering whether this will be the time you will gain an experience level (out of a maximum of 50), or discover that magical armour you've been searching for, or whether you will at last find the legendary 'Grandfather Sword'. Your character becomes your alter ego as you spend night after night questing for the best items and spells in order to kill that monster a little faster or be able to survive a little more in the next level. You may even wish to trade. Say you're a rogue with a mighty blade. The weapon's useless to you except maybe to scratch your back with. You can broadcast a message and advertise your blade for a more useful bow. Once you've found a likely customer, play the game and make the transaction. Be very wary though – there are professional traders out there who get a kick out of haggling a good price for your item and then selling it for a profit elsewhere.

Anger, fear, aggression...

As with most multi-player games, each *Battle.net* experience is different. Not just because of the random levels, but also because of the broad range of different people who take part. Each brings his or her own skills, cunning, and – sometimes – moral universe with them. There are those, for example, who make a living killing other players, known as Player Killers or

TIPS

1. Occasionally, if you can't seem to join a chosen game, just keep trying – some fat 14 year old American is probably blocking your entrance.
2. Play a game 'off local Internet clog up times' (typically after 11pm).
3. You can suffer the occasional freeze as someone joins or as the packets sent and received ebb and flow in the vast expanse of the Internet. Reconnect to your ISP if this becomes too regular – you may have an iffy connection.
4. Only choose games with one or two green bars in the join menu to get the smoothest quality game with the lowest ping.

MORE INFO

The Unofficial Diablo Home Page
http://www.scorched.com/

Diablo's Lair
http://www.dreamflyr.com /~sdformo/Diablo/lair.html

Blizzard's Diablo Forum
http://www.battle.net/diablo/forums.htm

Blizzard's Web Page
http://www.blizzard.com

Usenet
alt.games.diablo
comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.rpg

Meet our intrepid band of adventurers. From left to right we are Sylvester, Pamela, Mister T and... er... Peter Peter.

A little hop and skip down the dungeons and we are greeted with our first guest, The Butcher. A few seconds later and we've already made arrangements for his removal to the abattoir. Steady with the fireballs Mr T! Even in friendly mode, spells and arrows hurt.

Rogue, warrior or mage? Arrows, spells, swords? Who do you pick to go adventuring with? The honest answer is that it's up to you as each has his own unique style. The rogue is good against projectile-firing vermin or for picking off monsters as they come hurtling towards you; the warrior is the type who stumbles on a cave full of horned beasts and leaves with ivory tusks for the trophy cabinet; and the name 'mage' stands for utter devastation. However, because each creature is different, each character will have their own strengths and weaknesses, so it's important to have a well-balanced team.

Patience has run thin and we're all fed up of Mr T's careless fireballs. We decide to plan our tactics for a counterstrike to try and install some obedience into his dense ego. One click to change to aggressive mode and voilà, one egg fried mage coming up.

Like the gimp in *Pulp Fiction*, our chortles change to whimpers as, realising our plans for assassination, he unleashes the true power he's harnessed all these years. We are duly resurrected by him and it's time for humble pie.

Scrolls and books provide spells. Here the firewall spell is shown off. Yes, BURN, BURN, BURN, MUHAHAHAHAHA. Er... sorry Mr T, but they are immune to fire. Doh!

Diablo in all his evil prowess. All my comrades are dead, their bodies strewn around me. I'm out of health potions and have precious few life points. Ah... to die in battle. It is a glorious thing.

simply 'Pkillers'. They're usually rogues and usually ruthless. It can be irritating to be forever bumping into them but it does add a tint of peril to the game. You can never be quite sure whether your team mates will suddenly turn against you. The only things you lose when you're PKilled is half your gold, your ego and er... your ear. Yes, your ear. But, of course, just like the good old wild west, you can hire the services of other characters more powerful and better endowed than yourself to sort out the villains. Just put a price on the guy who did the dirty deed and the bounty will be picked up by roaming sword and spell slingers. They'll track down the culprit, kill him and return his ear as proof of death.

At the moment, there are about 150,000 people playing *Battle.net* worldwide, so it can be very difficult to meet the same person twice. If you like and trust who you are playing with, you can join their clan (if they have one that is). Clans are really just glorified notice boards telling you when the next game will be. And they also help by filtering out those from the 'Dark Side'.

Blizzard in their ultimate wisdom and utter naiveté decided to place your character's information within Windows 95 itself, the advantage being that you can use the same character whether you play on the Internet, network, modem or via serial cables. However, hackers have totally destroyed the integrity of the game by writing cheats in multi-play that can give you Herculean properties with a simple mouse click. It's a great shame and totally undermines what Blizzard are trying to achieve. The problem is compacted by the fact that PKillers more often than not use these cheats regularly. However, help is at hand and there is now a program called Dr Diablo which estimates what stats players should have and whether they are appropriate for that specific level. It's a pretty crude indicator, but at least it helps a little in deciding whether or not to play with your new found companion. Unfortunately, other cheats are less easy to overcome such as unlimited gold, every spell and weapon copying/creating 'add-ons'. Hopefully Blizzard should address this issue in future patches of *Diablo*.

Overall, *Battle.net* is an excellent, slick and well-presented multi-player action game, different to hyper-kinetic *Quake* fests while still maintaining varied and addictive gameplay. *Diablo* may not have the depth of a true role-playing game, but it does successfully meld together action in a fantasy environment. It's just a shame that there are so many cheats available for a multi-player game.

Oh, and currently there's no European *Battle.net* server, but we've heard rumours that a London-based one will be materialising shortly.

Stay tuned.

VERDICT

Play fair, don't cheat and you will be rewarded. Z

On-Line News & Gossip

All the latest news from the world of on-line gaming!

Grounds for a fight

ADOPTING A FIRST-PERSON 3D VIEW, BATTLEGROUND IS A futuristic multi-player tank game in which players team and compete against one another in an effort to secure territories and conquer enemy forces in a variety of arenas. Each arena is capable of holding up to twenty players with five players per team, with themes that range from heavy industrial cities to remote ice-covered stations.

Red, blue, green and grey colours represent each team within the arenas. These colours are displayed on the tanks themselves making it easy to distinguish friends from foes in the heat of battle. Teamwork will play an essential role in advancing through cities as players try to maintain an offensive front against enemies.

The key to controlling territory is the acquisition of Recon Stations, which are strategically located throughout each arena. Recon Stations allow you to repair and re-arm your tanks in the field without having to go all the way back to base. Capturing Recon Stations will greatly improve your team's odds in completing the ultimate goal – stealing an enemy's flag from their home base and returning it to your own.

During open-beta testing *Battleground* will be free for gamers registered with the Sony Station. When open-beta concludes an as yet unconfirmed monthly flat-fee pricing plan will be implemented based largely in part upon consumer response.

Minimum system requirements will be: Pentium 120, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95, 32-bit Internet Connection.

For more info go onto the WWW at: **http://www.sonygames.com**. To apply for the beta test e-mail **test@sonyinteractive.com**.

The Lightning, Vanguard, Devastator, Chameleon, and MagRider are the five devastating tanks in *Battleground*. Each tank sports its own individual set of attributes in terms of speed and manoeuvrability.

Net Meets

Just before Chrimbo last year, *PC Zone* were proud to send two envoys to a 'NetMeet' in Southampton. Organised by Craig Fletcher of the UK NetMeet Association, the gist was: 20 people, 20 PCs, 20 network cards in one hotel for three days. A wall-to-wall 24 hour network multi-player game festival. Despite the unfortunate personal hygiene problems of some of the players and an over-abundance of MacDonalds food (one guy threw up after too many cheese-burgers), much fun was had by all. The odd game of *Doom II* and *Duke Nukem* was sprinkled in between vast *Quake*-a-thons and tense *C&C* battles (this was before *Red Alert*). We are also happy to report that there was much debauchery in the evenings, and an attempt to get the french waitresses to play 'Strip Doom' ("If we frag you, you have to take your bra off!"). Ho ho etc.

Anyway, since then these NetMeets have taken off. There was one in Milton Keynes recently, and now Craig is planning a few more this year. "We're going to be holding three or four big events each year inter-spersed with smaller local ones all over the country. The interest in the local ones should give us more people willing to travel to the larger ones."

One such large one is planned for the end of July in Southampton. And it's nine days long. "We're hoping to break it up with paintball and bowling," says Craig. They're planning to play *Quake, Doom, Duke Nukem, Red Alert, Diablo*, plus any other cool network game which might appear in the interim. If you think you can spare a few days or even the whole nine days, pencil in 26 July to 3 August. Prices are £60 for a week, £20 for a weekend. Accomodation is available at the nearby Hotel Ibis for £21 per person sharing a twinroom per night.

The UK Net Gaming Association's rather gaudy webpage.

For more info on this and other NetMeets, especially a forthcoming Northern meet in Manchester on 28 March, check out the UK Gaming Association's homepage at: http://homepages.enterprise.net/njohnson. ...Or check out other amateur league type shennigans http://www.dragonfire.net/~ukga/ ukdm2lge/ (*for Doom II*), or http://www.dragonfire.net/~ukga/ukqkelge/ (for the UK *Quake* league). You can e-mail Craig at 101344.1565@compuserve.com.

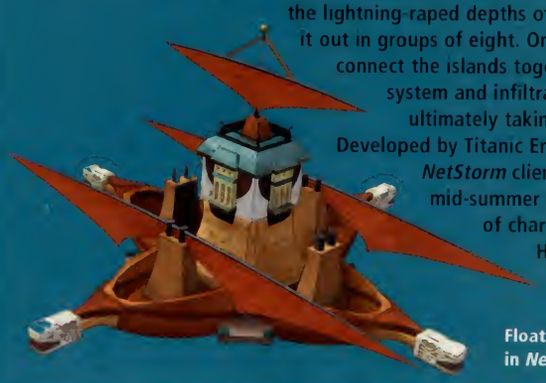
NetStorm in a teacup?

Also, *PC Zone* recently got the chance to try out Activision's new on-line strategy game *NetStorm*, and can report that first impressions are certainly favourable.

First mentioned in Bulletin a couple of issues ago, *NetStorm* places the player in control of their own little floating island in the sky from which they launch offensives to gain more land and defend themselves against enemy attack. More emphasis is being placed on unit generation and placement than unit control, so critical decision-making will be the key to success.

Partly played off-line (the resource management bits) *NetStorm* players will descend into the lightning-raped depths of a cloud-covered world to fight it out in groups of eight. Once in, the aim will then be to connect the islands together using a drop-down tile system and infiltrate enemy emplacements – ultimately taking over their defeated islands.

Developed by Titanic Entertainment for Activision, *NetStorm* client software will be available mid-summer and will be completely free of charge to those who want it. Http://www.titanic.com to find out more.



Float an 'air biscuit' at your opponents in *NetStorm*. Windy multi-player fun!

Internet Explorer Bug found

A group of Worcester Polytechnic students have discovered a bug in *Microsoft Internet Explorer 3*, which allows web page writers to use .LNK and .URL files to run programs on a remote computer. This bug is particularly damaging because it uses NO ActiveX, and works even when Internet Explorer is set to its highest security level. What this means, in plain English, is that, with the bugged version of *Explorer*, files from a website could automatically be downloaded and executed onto the end user's hard drive without them even knowing about it (imagine FORMAT C:\ running in the background!). This bug can be used to wreak havoc on a remote user's machine.

A bug fix patch is available at **http://www.microsoft.com/ie/default.asp**, and technical updates are currently located at **http://www.microsoft.com/ie/security/update.html**. Those of you curious to find out more, or maybe even want to try out a simulated example of the problem, should point to **http://www.cybersnot.com/iebug.html**.

Drive-In Quake

News of an unbelievable new *Quake* add-on is filtering through the on-line community, again proving that iD's legendary 3D engine is the most versatile piece of software ever created for the PC.

Quake Rally, as the title suggests, turns this top-selling first-person shoot 'em up into a fully-fledged racing game, with realistic car dynamics and multi-player race facilities.

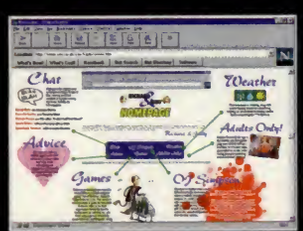
Developed by Ryan Feltrin, a computer science student based at the University of South Australia, *Quake Rally* will feature muddy, bitumen and dry dirt tracks, on-vehicle mounted weapons, gates, bridges, realistic headlights, dark tunnels and a whole host of other things.

"We are working very hard to make *Quake Rally* the best it possibly can be," said Feltrin when asked about the game's release. "We have almost finalised the inertia, the car models are now complete and we're 75% done with the car skins. I would love to be able to give you guys a release date, but I just can't do it. We have no idea when it'll be done, but as you can see from the proposed features list, it won't be far away now. Please bear with us, the wait will be worth it."

iD have also been helping out with a few test courses, so we guess they're as impressed by Feltrin's work as we are. *PC Zone* can hardly wait. For more *Quake Rally* info check out **http://www.frag.com/quakerally**.

www.cool_site_to_visit.com

Http://www.cex.co.uk/cex/kaylo/kindex.htm



Oh here we go again, hyping our own Charlie Brooker. Aren't we good to him? Well, yes we are because his stuff is bloody good, *and* he's got his own self-constructed website. It's funnee! And... and it's got bits that have been "rejected by the Dennis Publishing legal department", whoever the hell they are. So whether you're looking for cheap laughs, new swearwords or a bit of social advice, then Superkaylo On-line has something for you. Honest. Can I have that £50 now Charlie?

AlfaTwin

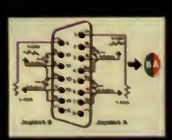
The ONLY automatic joystick selector you'll ever need

PC Format Gold

PC Format Magazine September 1996 Issue

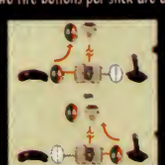
"One of the most annoying problems of PC gaming has finally been solved!" *PC Player 7/96*

Patent Pending

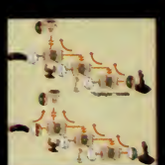


Although most PCs have only one game port the design actually supports two joysticks (A & B). Advanced sticks that sport four buttons , throttle and rudder controls or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls. When two sticks are connected only two fire buttons per stick are available.

In two player mode, both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player-games. However, due to the design of the IBM joystick port, the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



Select single player mode and the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks. In this mode, all the functions of the stick are supported. To select your stick, simply press the fire button of the controller you wish to use.



You can cascade up to three AlfaTwins together. This allows four different joysticks to be connected simultaneously. Moreover, the six foot long cable brings the AlfaTwin round to the front of your desk, freeing you from the hassle of plugging/unplugging your joystick from the back of the computer.

AlfaCommander Pro

AlfaPilot Plus

Leading joystick manufacturer says:

"Just to let you know that the AlfaTwin Joystick-switch arrived intact. At this moment I have connected 7 (!) joysticks to the AlfaTwin :-) and it works perfectly.

Computer – – – AlfaTwin
- Gravis Phoenix
- Gravis GrIP
- Gravis GamePads

"This all works without having to pull out all the cables, einfach wunderbar! I cannot say anything else except congratulations with a very nice product."
Edo Oskam ,Technical Support Specialist (Gravis Europe/Holland)

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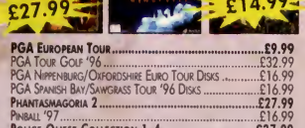

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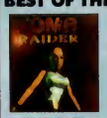

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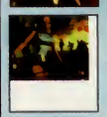

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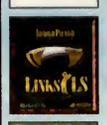

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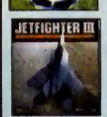

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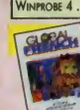

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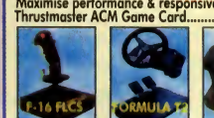

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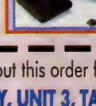

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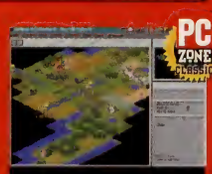

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TROUBLESHOOTER!

This month Warren Chrismas reveals exactly how to get through the first CD of what has proved to be one of the most challenging games ever - *C&C: Red Alert.*

Command & Conquer: Red Alert Mission Guide

05a

05a

OBJECTIVE: Rescue Tanya. Destroy all Soviet air defences and then all other building and units

Yep, we're starting at mission 5. Completely stuck on levels 1, 2, 3 or 4? Then *Red Alert* is not the game for you – try *Barbie Fashion Designer* or something. Okay, this one is fairly tricky. Your spy is only detectable by guard dogs, but getting him to the weapons factory in the middle of the base will probably take a few attempts. The best advice is to sit and observe the patterns of the guard patrols before moving. You should save often, of course.

Once in, the spy drives a truck south to the prison. Tanya emerges, but is immediately fired on by Yaks. The trick here is to head north straightaway, pick off the infantry and dogs, shoot the barrels and destroy the aircraft runways. Blow up the four SAM sites; Tanya is taken away in a helicopter.

With the reinforcements that arrive in the north-west, you've got to destroy all the Soviet units. The easiest way is to capture the construction yard, weapons factory and barracks. You need to attack the buildings first, as they must be 75 per cent damaged before they can be captured by engineers. Once yours, repair the buildings and then construct a refinery.

To storm the Soviet base, you'll need to build up a huge number of tanks. It helps if you can stop its ore trucks. But watch out for heavy – albeit predictable – attacks from the south and south-east. The V2 rocket launchers are particularly nasty. If you took over the Soviet weapons factory, you can build your own V2s, plus heavy tanks and Yaks (build a radar dome to access these), making the level much easier.

05b

OBJECTIVE: Rescue Tanya. Destroy all Soviet air defences and then all other building and units

The objectives of this mission are exactly the same, the only difference being the actual map. Head across the bridge and go to the weapons factory via the east entrance of the base. The truck then takes you a long distance to the prison. With Tanya freed, shoot the nearby barrels to destroy two of the SAM sites and set charges on the others. Don't blow a hole in the bridge – it's easy to get stuck. Reinforcements arrive from the south. Now, as with 5A, you should aim to capture as many enemy structures as possible. And then clear up. This is the easiest of the three mission 5 options.

05c

OBJECTIVE: Rescue Tanya. Destroy all Soviet air defences and then all other building and units

Again, exactly the same bar the map. To get into the base, follow the dogs west, cross the ravine below the base and then enter from the south. Tanya has six SAM sites to destroy in this mission. Whatever you do, don't destroy the Tech Centre – it attracts unwanted attention. Reinforcements arrive in the north-east. While it's easy up to this point, taking over the base and wiping out the enemy can be a little tricky with this mission, making it the hardest of the three options. You've got no chance of taking the barracks – they're surrounded by barrels – so destroy it straightaway and get moving fast.

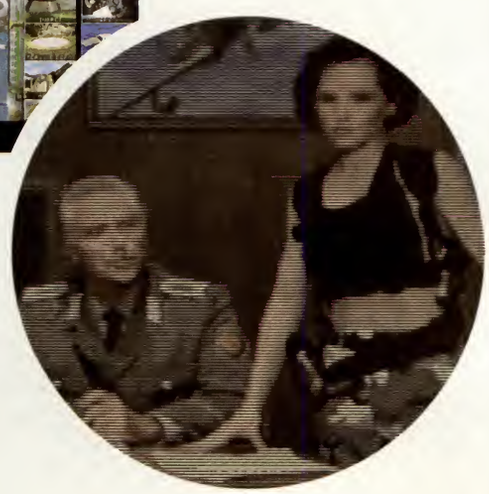
06a

OBJECTIVE: Get spy into a Soviet Tech Centre and destroy all enemy

Deploy your MCV straightaway, then build a power plant, barracks and a refinery. The Soviets attack from the south very quickly, so build some pillboxes around your base as soon as you can. You'll also need plenty of rocket soldiers to protect you from air attacks. Oh, and you'll need to watch your ore truck too – they come after it.

06b

Between attacks, build up some medium tanks and attack the base to the south. Do not destroy it! Capture the barracks with an engineer and infiltrate the radar dome with a

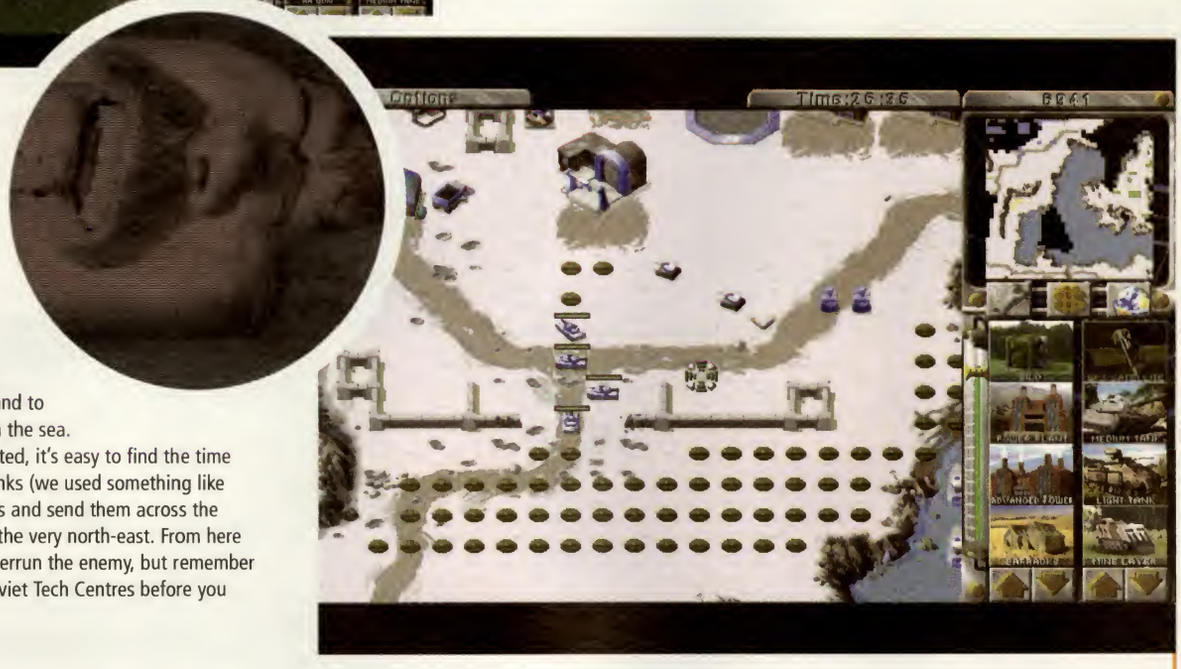


Di you!

Not sure which level you're stuck on? Hit the Escape key during a mission and you'll see a small number in the bottom-right corner of the screen which looks something like this: SCGxxEy (for Allied missions) or SCUxxEy (for Soviet missions). xx is the mission number. y is either A, B or C, depending on which level you have chosen to do.

So now you know.

07a



spy (this enables you to see what the enemy is doing). Build a naval yard and block the coastline with tanks to stop the Soviets reaching the island via landing craft. Build AA guns around the naval yard and deploy rocket soldiers to prevent air strikes and put gunboats around the small island to the south, to stop attacks from the sea.

With your bases well protected, it's easy to find the time to build a huge battalion of tanks (we used something like 40!). Load them into transports and send them across the water, to unload at the bay in the very north-east. From here on in, it's a piece of cake to overrun the enemy, but remember to get a spy into one of the Soviet Tech Centres before you wipe them all out!

06b

OBJECTIVE: Get spy into a Soviet Tech Centre and destroy all enemy

Same objectives as 6A but a completely different map and a tad easier. Finding space to deploy your MCV and build up a base in the starting position is tough but possible (just plan carefully). Build pillboxes to guard the crossing as soon as possible. Deploy rocket soldiers to prevent air attacks. Build a naval yard on both sides of the crossing and have gunboats on guard, particularly in the south-east corner. Watch for Soviet landings to the west of your base.

Build a group of medium tanks (say eight) and destroy the nearby base (don't bother taking it over – it's too difficult to defend). Build more gunboats for protection and get at least three harvesters to work – you need the cash. To do it the proper way, you should get a spy into a transport at this point, and land in the north-west corner. It's easy to get him into the Tech Centre from here. Now concentrate on building at least five transports and fill them each with medium tanks. Again, land these in the north-west (together, and under protection of gunboats). Now destroy the Tesla coil and get to work destroying the rest of the base. If the mission won't finish, there's probably still a Soviet sub in the sea.

07a

OBJECTIVE: Capture Radar Centre and destroy Soviet sub pens

Straight into the action with this one. Kill the small group of enemy troops and set up base as soon as possible, mining the ore field on the west coast. You'll need to defend your ore truck and base from heavy air attacks throughout (watch out also for naval attacks on your base later in the mission). Build some medium tanks and attack the mini base to the south. Capture the radar dome with an engineer. You can then sell it if you want to, but we took over and then defended the whole base, using the new facility to control the ore-rich area.

Make sure you keep attacking the enemy ore truck and keep everything well defended. With your position consolidated, you'll have plenty of time to build up a huge force. Send a large group of tanks into the enemy base in the east and you shouldn't have a problem mopping up – but watch out for the Tesla coils. The sub pens which need to be destroyed are in the south-east corner.

08a

OBJECTIVE: Protect the Chronosphere and Advanced Tech Centres. Keep power on

Top mission this, but a little tricky. The first thing to do is to get the units in the south up into the main base in the north. You can fight your way through the enemy tanks on the road to the west, or try to simply rush past – just make sure you protect the mine layers and the MCV. Moving the destroyers along the water to the west can help. Get the ore truck to work as soon as possible and repair any damaged buildings.

When your convoy is inside the base, deploy the MCV and get building rocket soldiers, AA guns, pillboxes, turrets and tanks. And then more tanks. And then some more. You'll need them to defend from heavy attacks from the south and west. Use the mine layers to heavily (and we mean, heavily) mine the entrances to the base and, in particular, the coastline (this prevents enemy transports from landing). Replace detonated mines regularly. Remember, there is no need to attack the

08a

9

10a

enemy base – just make sure you defend the Chronosphere and Advanced Tech Centres and that the power is switched on when the timer runs out. Sorted.

09a

OBJECTIVE: Get spy into Soviet Command Centre. Take Kosygin back to your base

Deploy the MCV and build a small base with all the usual essentials. Make sure you defend the north of the island with at least 15 rocket soldiers. Build light tanks to block the shorelines from enemy invasion (it soon becomes apparent where the enemy likes to land).

You need to get a spy into a transport to get to the Command Centre in the top-middle of the enemy base on the other island to the north (you must build a radar dome before you can train a spy). You can land to the south of the island and work your way carefully through the base, but you may find it much easier just to land in the far north-east corner. Make sure you don't accidentally get squished by tanks though, and remember the guard dogs will soon sniff you out and kill you. We took a couple of spare spies for emergencies!

Once you're in the Centre the defector, Vladimir Kosygin, appears. More guard dogs emerge and you probably won't be able to get him out without sending in some tanks or infantry (just make sure that you keep him protected – the position behind the Centre is pretty safe). Get Kosygin back into your base to finish the mission. Incidentally, it's possible to win by wiping out the enemy base, but it becomes a huge struggle that can take hours. Persevering with guard dog dodging is a much better option.

10a

OBJECTIVE: Capture Soviet Command Centre. Disable the four Control Centres inside the building within the time limit

This is the toughest mission yet as you start with next to nothing and are immediately up against a sizeable force and base. The secret is not to provoke skirmishes early on. Build a base along to the east of the start position nearer the main ore deposits which run along the bottom of the screen.

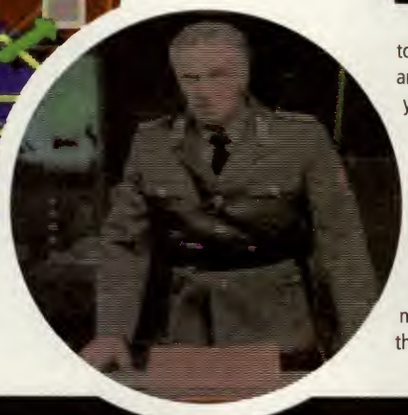
Scout around a little and protect your base from infantry (with pillboxes) and air attacks (with AA guns), but try to concentrate on building up a huge force of medium tanks and Longbows (we used around 20 of each). As your forces are growing, begin to pick off the enemy, particularly its ore trucks.

Once you begin destroying the enemy base, Stalin begins the missile launch sequence and a timer begins. From this point you must aim to capture the Command Centre (the heavily-protected building to the north of the enemy base) with an engineer as soon as possible. The time left on the clock is the time you have for the second part of the mission (don't worry if you fail the first time around – console yourself with the fact that Paris gets nuked!).

Okay, now you're inside the Command Centre – the first of the 'indoor' missions – with a handful of personnel made up

10b

11a



to get them. Deploy both your MCVs, build two ore refineries and begin building Longbows and medium tanks as fast as you can. Make sure you build a Tech Centre so you're able to see the whole map (it's important on this mission as there are two islands to attack). Pairs of mammoth tanks patrol to the north and to the east – keep an eye on them.

When you've run out of ore to mine, it's time to move north and make an attack. You'll find that the Soviets start to build up the base on the east island. You can restrict this by destroying its ore trucks with your helicopters. Obviously, you need to take out as much of the base as you can. To destroy the area to the far north, filled with power plants and SAM sites, send tanks through the walls from the east, but watch out for the tesla coils.

If you build (or infiltrate) a sub pen, you can easily expose the Soviet submarines by building a decoy or using a sonar pulse. Don't worry though – if you haven't got all of the enemy subs (or attack weapons) when your naval force arrives, just make sure that you have your Longbows ready and waiting along the coastline to pick them off. Build enough choppers in this mission and it's pretty darn easy.

12a

OBJECTIVE: Capture all Tech Centres. Destroy Iron Curtain prototype

There's probably some fancy way to finish this level but we just used brute force, destroying both Soviet bases (there's one to the west and one to the east) and then capturing the remaining Tech Centres with engineers (make sure you don't wipe them out – they're the ones with the little statues outside).

If you build your base where the MCV lands, as you should, you'll need to defend from both sides (the enemy typically follow the road). Pillboxes should keep Soviet troops at bay, but make sure you build plenty of AA guns to protect from the air. To get into a position to attack the enemy bases, you'll need a (very) large force of medium tanks and Longbows, so keep building as you defend.

When mammoth tanks attack and turn invulnerable (they'll glow red), lead them away from your base. You'll need to guard your ore trucks, particularly in the area in the south-west corner where the enemy frequently patrols. As always, take the Soviet ore trucks out where possible. The base to the west (which contains the sphere-like Iron Curtain building) is most active, so work on this first.

13a

OBJECTIVE: Place explosives on all generators. Get out before nerve gas is used

Where do we start? This is the second 'indoor' mission and it's considerably tougher than the second part of mission 10. To get through you must use engineers to blow up the various flame turrets by activating the control panels in the walls. There's a panel directly above the top group – make sure you activate this before moving east or you'll get fried.

of spies, engineers, medics and infantry. Send a spy south (carefully dodging the dogs) until you get to the room full of mammoth tanks. Head for the 'exit' and Tanya appears with all guns blazing. Use her to pick off the enemy one by one (healing her with a medic when necessary), with engineers following behind, disabling each of the four control centres. If you gave yourself enough time from the first part of the mission (ten minutes, ideally), this part is pretty easy. Watch out for the flame turret though!

11a

OBJECTIVE: Clear the way for naval vessels arriving in two hours time

Regular air bombardments aside, the Soviets shouldn't attack too heavily in this mission. But that's not the point – you've got

12a

Further east there's another flame turret blocking the way. The corresponding panel for this is to the east of the group of units at the bottom of the screen. Move the group to the top of the corridor and then send one soldier east to shoot the barrels (you should be able to avoid the oncoming trucks). Then send the rest in if necessary. You'll find the panel across the other side of the room.

And so it goes on. There's not enough room to explain every last movement, but here's a few pointers. Firstly, slow the game down – it gives you more time to think (don't hang about though, as it's easy to run out of time). Save often – one false move and you could be screwed. Make sure you use the spy intelligently, checking out uncovered areas before diving in (this is easier said than done, as there are a lot of guard dogs around). Needless to say, the medics and engineers are invaluable so keep them safe by following a distance behind the infantry. Finally, keep all your units under close control – leave them standing and they'll often fire at unimportant targets such as the dormant tanks. Where are the generator control panels? Now that would be telling!

14a

OBJECTIVE: Destroy everything!

You've got to the last level (you've had far too much spare time on your hands!). This one's hard because surviving the first few minutes is tricky and the Soviet base is absolutely huge. It's not impossible though – just very time-consuming.

Move Tanya and the thieves south as soon as the mission starts to avoid the exploding barrels. Now send Tanya west, carefully picking off infantry as you go. When you reach the coast, head north into the base, take out the power plants and destroy the truck (which drops a crate of money). Destroy all the power plants and you should be clear to send the thieves into the enemy ore silos to get you extra cash.

Reinforcements will have arrived allowing you to set up base, and from here on in it's a huge scrap. You have Chronosphere technology available for the first time, which enables you to temporarily move a unit across the battlefield. The most effective use of this is to build a destroyer and chrono-shift it into the lakes near the enemy base (you'll obviously need to build a naval yard near the coast). Watch for attacks from invulnerable mammoth tanks, as before. Mining the area around your base is a must. Surprise surprise, you'll also need plenty of air defences. As usual, destroying enemy ore trucks is vital. It'll take a couple of hours, but charge into the main areas of the Soviet base with plenty of medium tanks and Longbows and you shouldn't have a problem cleaning up.

Now you've got everything you need to know about the Allied missions, you'd better make sure you don't miss out on next month's *PC Zone* if you want to get through the Soviet ones...

13b

14a

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Fifty PC Zone is Issues old!

Yep, it's true – we know we may not look it, but the UK's biggest and best PC games magazine is also the longest running.

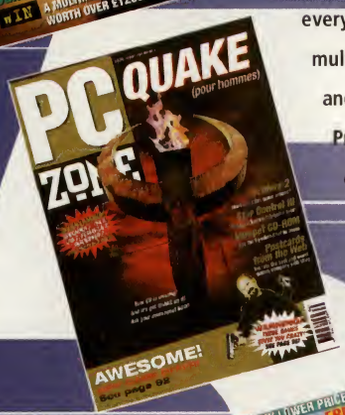
Our first issue hit the shelves way back in April 1993. Not only did it boast an EXCLUSIVE preview of LucasArts' *X-Wing*, but over 60 pages of reviews and previews, a complete guide to every game available and a complete solution of Infogrames' groundbreaking *Alone In The Dark*. On the cover-mounted floppies (we didn't do a CD version of the mag back then 'cos hardly anyone owned a CD-ROM drive, and those that did were seen to be weirdos with too much money to spend on the latest gadget) were playable demos of Gremlin's (no one called themselves 'Interactive' back then) top platform bouncer *Zool* and Apogee's "brand new shoot 'em up" *Major Stryker*. You could also win a multimedia system (a 486 with CD-ROM would you believe?).

How thing's change. Or don't. This issue's got an EXCLUSIVE preview of LucasArts' *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* on the cover. Yep, it's *Star Wars* again. The magazine might have grown in size, but it's still packed with the latest previews and reviews. There's a complete guide to the Allied missions in Westwood's *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* and the CD features some cracking playable demos of Bullfrog's *Theme Hospital*, Interplay's *MDK* and Empire Interactive's (now everyone sticks 'Interactive' after their name) superb *Flying Corps*. And you can win a multimedia PC (this one's not a 486, so don't worry). Patrick McCarthy, Duncan MacDonald and David 'Macca' McCandless are still writing for us and longstanding stalwarts Paul Presley, Charlie Brooker and Chris Anderson are now very much part of the fold (we even gave Chris Anderson a full-time job).

So not much has changed at all really. New faces have come and gone. Some are still here and just won't go away.

So, it's with a tear in our eye that we at *PC Zone* salute you, the reader. We couldn't have made the mag such a success without you. Thanks for keeping us at the top, and for being as addicted to PC games as we are. Thanks too, to all the software houses for their continued support and finally, to God, for planting so many trees when he built the world which enables us to be printed. Here's to the next fifty issues. Long may we reign.

ALL AT PC ZONE



PC ZONE Recommends

Welcome to the *PC Zone* Recommended section. Here you'll find the cream of the games we've painstakingly reviewed and picked out over the last years, plus those we feel should go down in PC gaming history as all-time Classics.

WELCOME TO THE PC ZONE Recommends section. It's here that you'll find, what are, in our opinion, the very best games ever released for the PC.

In an effort to keep it simple, we've spilt it up into genres: Action games, Sports simulations, Adventure games, Flight simulations, Driving games, Role-Playing Games and Strategy games.

The top ten games of each genre are then listed, with a brief summary of the game, review score, publisher and contact number. Most of the games listed here were awarded *PC Zone* Classic status (90 per cent and above), and some managed a *PC Zone* Recommended award (80 per cent and above) at the time that they were reviewed. To achieve the highest accolade, a game must not only be very playable, entertaining and offer long-term appeal, but it must also be original and/or offer something new and worthwhile to the genre. To this end, we've included some sequels, which although scored lower than the original title, are deemed better games (they didn't get a higher score 'cos it had already been done and therefore they weren't exactly bursting with originality – okay?), so this guide isn't a list of the highest scoring games ever reviewed by *PC Zone*, but a guide to the best games now available.

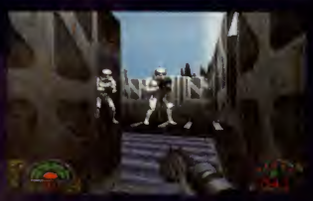
When you're reading the reviews in the rest of the magazine, please remember to bear this section in mind. The highest scoring game is supposed to represent a benchmark in a particular genre, and we will always be comparing new games with this, in accordance with the above criteria. As a result, you will see games dropping out of this section as new and better titles are released, so keep your eyes peeled for new entries in each of the genres.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

Action

QUAKE (96)
The seminal 3D shoot 'em up and quite possibly the most important PC game ever released. Very atmospheric when played as a one-player game and untouchable when played over a network.
Publisher:
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)

TIE FIGHTER (94)
Still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever released, it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast *TIE* on *X-Wing* fisticuffs..
Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



DARK FORCES (95)
Although not as technically impressive as *Quake*, *Dark Forces* is still held up as a better one-player game by some and yet slandered by others for not having a multi-player facility. That aside, it's a thrilling 3D mix of shooting action and exploration.
Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)

TOMB RAIDER (94)
The first game to take the *Alone In The Dark* principles and apply them in a new, in-yer-face way. The play area is vast, the puzzles are clever and it's eminently playable. If you have a 3Dfx card, you're in for a treat.
Publisher:
Core/EIDOS (0181 780 2222)

HEXEN (94)
Although surpassed by the big *Q*, *Hexen* is still an enjoyable cast 'em up with a strong RPG slant. The levels are huge and it'll take you an age to finish as a one-player game. As a multi-player game it doesn't offer anything new, but it's good network fodder.
Publisher:
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)

DUKE NUKEM 3D (93)
The debate rages on, and there are still an awful lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.
Publisher:
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)

FADE TO BLACK (94)
The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical pre-cursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.
Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

MAGIC CARPET 2 (92)
The original game had us all wooed with its speed and smoothness and the sequel was even better, with new night-time bits, new monsters and a very useful on-line help system. Technically exquisite, the game engine has yet to be bettered.
Publisher:
Bullfrog/EA (01753 549442)

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (94)
The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin to use live action in a positive way. Packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)

MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES (90)
Of all the HERC-based games, this is the best. Successfully mixing real-time combat action with a thoroughly stomping engine, it's action-packed and fab over a network.
Publisher:
Activision (01895 456700)

Driving

CARMAGEDDON (95)
Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of different cars to choose from, plenty of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this one of the most entertaining driving games ever.
Publisher:
SCI (0171 585 3308)

NASCAR RACING 2 (92)
A worthy upgrade of the original game, featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, more controllable cars, improved opponent AI, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. With the constant stream of headset messages that add atmosphere this is a rac ing sim fan must.
Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

NETWORK Q RAC RALLY (94)
The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited *Sega Rally*. Go buy it!
Publisher:
Europress Software (01625 859333)

INDYCAR 2 (90)
The only real alternative to *F1GP2*, if you don't mind going round and round in circles, but still crave that unbelievable detail. Technically mind-blowing, though a little chuggy on anything but a high-end Pentium in SVGA mode.
Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

SCREAMER 2 (93)
Whereas the first game cocked its hat at the classic *Ridge Racer*, this game is *Sega Rally* in just about every way but name – except that it's better in every way. Like *TNFS* it's very much an arcader, which makes it ideal for a quick fix.
Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)

POD (90)
One of the first racing games to support 3DfX, Direct3D and MMX. The graphics are awesome (understatement of the year) and with new cars, tracks and power-ups promised to be posted regularly on the Internet, you'll never get bored.
Publisher:
Ubi Soft (0181 941 4004)

MICRO MACHINES 2 (93)
The console classic is converted to the PC as new tracks provide a new challenge. The easy to use control system means it's user-friendly for the uninitiated. This version comes with a track designer.
Publisher:
Codemasters (01926 814132)

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 (86)
Another sequel, but this one's actually much better than the first game. The tracks are much improved, the cars handle much better and there's loads more options. Worth buying even if you own the original.
Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 (92)
The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Ninja Pentium needed to run the hi-res mode – but it's still great.
Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

THE NEED FOR SPEED (89)
Exciting arcade racing action at its best with a good selection of cars and road tracks. Suicidal oncoming traffic and angry cops entrench *TNFS* firmly within the 'arcade' game sector.
Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

Sports

LINKS LS (94)
The classic golf sim gets a much needed update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more gameplay options, gorgeous graphics and a redesigned menu and view selection system which make it better than ever. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.
Publisher:
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB (90)
Of the myriad of pinball releases on the PC, *The Web* is the finest. You may only get to play on one table, but it's so detailed and full of features it doesn't really matter. Accurate ball physics and distracting bonus games make it the ultimate in pinball action on the PC.
Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)

PGA TOUR 96 (94)
There's little choice between *PGA Tour 96* and *PGA European Tour*, it just depends on your preferred choice of accents and jumpers. Both games offer fantastic graphics, a very easy-to-use control method and plenty of customisable play options. Golfing at its best.
Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

NHL HOCKEY 97 (90)
Visually slick and very playable, this 'all-new' updated *NHL* game features some new graphical tweaks and a smoother, faster engine. There's a handful of national sides thrown in as well as the most recently completed season's statistics and teams.
Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

ACTUA SOCCER (92)
The best soccer game on the PC, thanks to a super 3D polygonal engine and motion captured players. In two-player mode it excels, and Barry Davies gives some knockout commentary.
Publisher:
Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)

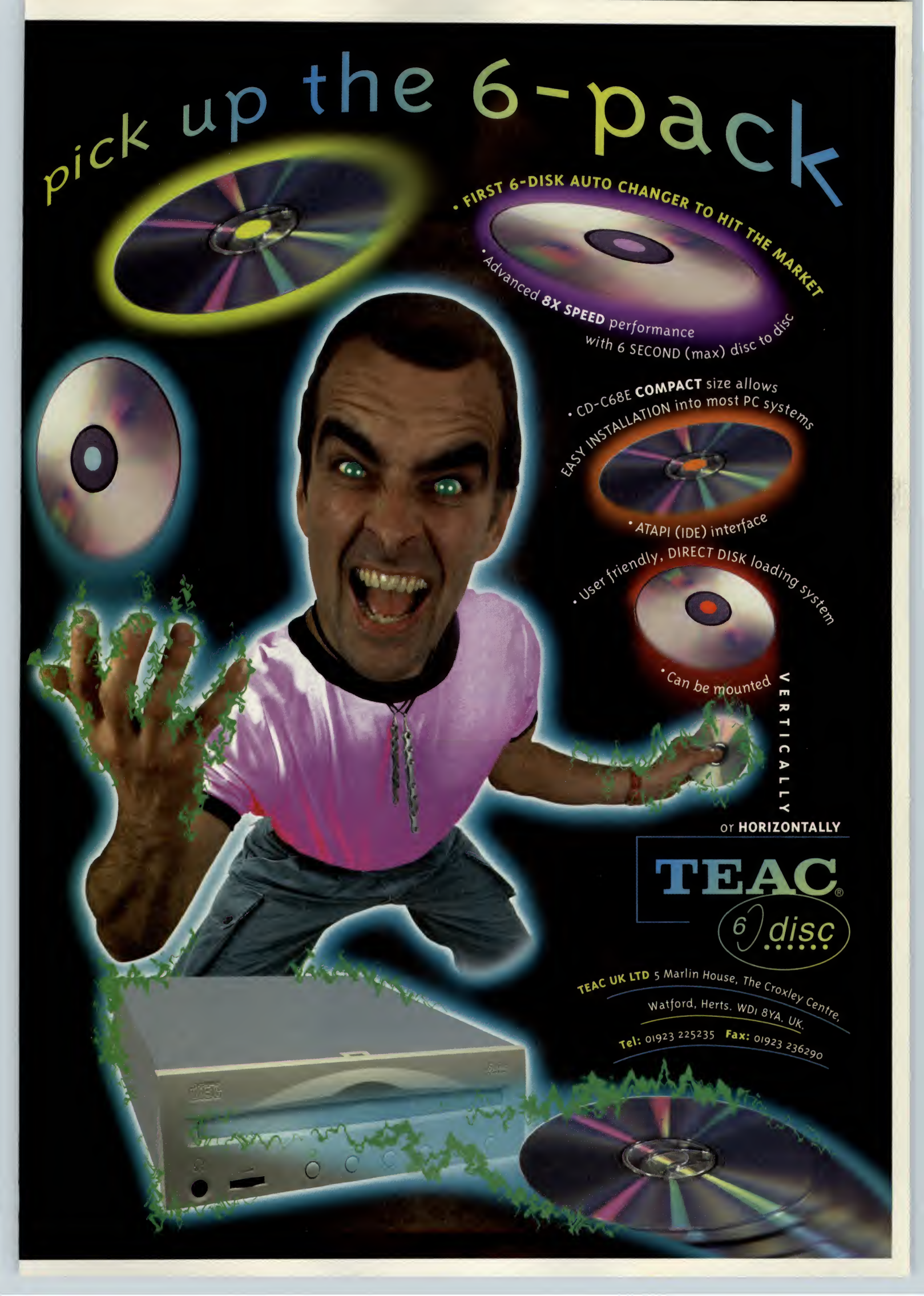
MADDEN NFL 97 (87)
This PC incarnation is well up to the quality seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we now assume as standard for an EA Sports release. The best US footie game on the PC.
Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

NBA LIVE 97 (92)
Much better than the previous version, which lacked drive, this offering is well put together. With excellent graphics, sound effects and a hip soundtrack, thankfully it plays as good as it looks.
Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

FIFA SOCCER 97 (84)
Despite the hype, it's not the best soccer sim on the market. If you're familiar with the control system, are wooed by glossy presentation and are a bit of a *FIFA*-head at heart, you'll like it. Otherwise...
Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)

VIRTUAL POOL (91)
Simple but very playable pool sim with an ingenious mouse-drag control system and impressive engine. One-player games are fun, two-player games and network links are even better.
Publisher:
Interplay (01628 423666)

FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL (85)
An interesting game that nicks the best bits from other baseball games. Gameplay is a tad on the uninspired side as things plod along, but then this *is* a baseball game.
Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)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Adventures

ALONE IN THE DARK 3 (95)

Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation, that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. Now available as part of a compilation budget pack.

Publisher:
Infogrames (0181 738 8199)

INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (93)

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metro-polis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)

BIOFORGE (95)

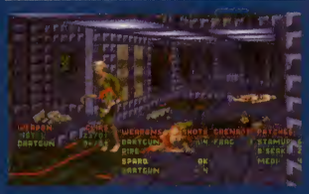
Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE (93)

Adeline's visually stunning isometric journey through the surreal land of Twinsun stole our hearts in 1995. The gloriously animated characters really bring the static backgrounds to life. *LBA* is pretty difficult, but time investment is worthwhile.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01752 549442)



SYSTEM SHOCK (95)

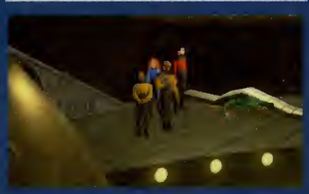
This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the game. The graphics and atmosphere are invigorating.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

ECSTATICA II (90)

We dubbed it "An adventure with balls". It's hard but also one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. *Ecstatica II* constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan occupied for weeks on end.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY (94)

A style oozer. As a point-and-clicker it draws you in, and at times you feel as if you're inside a *Star Trek: TNG* episode. Non-linear and beautifully presented, it's a Trek-head must-buy. Yet to be bettered.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Anyone with even a casual interest in adventures must have this game. The graphics look dated, but the one-liners are side-splitters. And it's on budget!

Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)

DISCWORLD II (93)

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate follow-up to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the missing Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld 2* is a universally appealing adventure game.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

SAM & MAX (93)

Steve Purcell's hilarious dog/rabbit 'freelance police' duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase.

Publisher:
US Gold (0121 625 3388)

Role-Playing Games

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS (94)

Following on from where *The Stygian Abyss* left off, this improves on almost every aspect of its prequel. Again the Avatar is the explorer of a complex, ever-evolving dungeon. Classic stuff with unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)

RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET (78)

An improvement over SSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs, it plonks the player in an arid landscape populated by Stone Golems and vicious scorpions in a bid to fight your way out. The graphics are average but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy.

Publisher:
Mindscape (01444 246333)

ULTIMA VII (89)

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction with the exploration of the detailed world of Britannia. This is the last of the *Ultima* series to give you complete party control.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS (PRE-PC ZONE)

This one took RPGs away from first-person tile-based RPGs. In character as the Avatar, the player is intuitively capable of everything from combat to casting.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)

DIABLO (88)

Diablo is standard hack 'n' slash fare but the game's designers pull the whole thing off with such style that the overall game experience is addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat.

Publisher:
Zablac/Blizzard (01626 332233)

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II (PRE-PC ZONE)

It's one of those 'olde-worlde', first-person RPGs, but its progressive, party-based gameplay, and subtle story elements set it worlds apart from all the other dross.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)

TERRIS (88)

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but so horribly addictive that we're still playing it today. *Terris* has enough quests, puzzles and monsters to keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent.

Publisher:
AOL (0800 2797444)

LANDS OF LORE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Graphics *and* gameplay! Westwood Studios' graphical flair shines through in this push-scrolling story about a witch in a purple cloak. Adding non-player characters to your party still keeps the game interesting.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)

MERIDIAN 59 (86)

This ground-breaking on-line RPG, though cursed with garish and horrible graphics, allows thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. It's currently one of the best on-line multi-player RPGs around.

Publisher:
3DO Company (0181 541 4082)

BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR (PRE-PC ZONE)

First-person perspective RPG with a huge game world and fairly complex battle system. Failed to take the RPG crown from *Ultima* due to limited character interaction, but a worthy contender for a second-hand buy.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

Strategy

SYNDICATE WARS (95)
One of the best strategy games of all time gets the sequel treatment, and what a sequel it is: intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy, even Charlie Brooker – and that's saying something.
Publisher:
EA/Bullfrog (01753 549442)

SIMCITY 2000 (92)
Classic game that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.
Publisher:
Maxis (0171 505 1500)

X-COM 2: TERROR FROM THE DEEP (94)
TFTD may be showing its age graphically but who cares when you've got a game as addictive as this one. Mixing turn-based combat with resource management and sophisticated research trees, *TFTD* deserves to be in any strategy fan's collection.
Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 (90)
So you want to be a football manager, eh? Well so does our Jeremy, which is why he spends his life playing this, the most realistic, addictive football management game available, and not a spreadsheet as Chris keeps telling everyone. Heathen!
Publisher:
Domark (0181 780 2222)

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT (94)
...or *C&C* in SVGA with a few new units to be more exact. It's a testament to the original game's addictive gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be enormous fun to play. Still well worth buying.
Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)

CIVILIZATION 2 (90)
Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most famous and successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one but we felt that this game merited a '90s update and entrance to *PC Zone's* hall of fame.
Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

MASTER OF ORION 2 (92)
Very sophisticated space exploration/strategy game that rewards long-term play. You can play it for months and still find new things to research. If you're willing to put the time into it, *Orion 2* will stay on your hard drive for aeons.
Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 2 (87)
Uninspiring graphics, a dodgy combat system and wizards do not a great game make, right? Er, wrong actually, in the case of this gem. Take it from us, this is the closest you'll get to *Civ 2* with fantasy characters.
Publisher:
The 3DO Company (0181 296 1949)

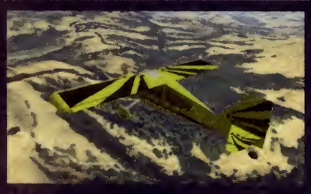
SETTLERS 2 (92)
Manage little people, build stuff for their little towns, then kick the shit out of the opposition. Brilliant game but make sure you've got plenty of time on your hands.
Publisher:
Zablac (01604 232200)

WARCRAFT 2 (82)
C&C in Tolkienesque clothing, basically. It was a bigger hit with you lot than it was with us, which is why it's gatecrashing our hot games section. A worthwhile purchase.
Publisher:
Zablac (01626 332233)

Flight Simulations

EF2000 (97)
With fantastic graphics and a very realistic flight model, this is one of the best flight sims on the PC. Not even Microsoft's mighty flight sim can topple it from the top of the *PC Zone* prop-head ladder. It looks gorgeous with 3Dfx and the forthcoming *SuperEF2000* with Tacticom will bring the game a new lease of life.
Publisher:
Ocean/DID (0161 832 6633)

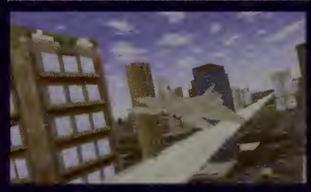
US MARINE FIGHTERS (92)
The lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model kept our Group Publisher Tim happy, so you can bet it's pretty damned good. Originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters, Marine Fighters* now comes as part of the *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so go and get that instead!
Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



FLIGHT UNLIMITED (96)
This was the first flight sim to sport truly amazing graphics and a frighteningly realistic flight model. You don't get to kill anyone (just like *Flight Sim 95*) but it still stands up well against today's competition.
Publisher:
Looking Glass/Virgin (0171 368 2255)

FLYING CORPS (92)
Action-packed WWI flight sim with neato graphics. Nostalgic gamers will recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best WW1 sim.
Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)

APACHE LONGBOW (96)
The *EF2000* of helicopter sims in as much as it marries fab graphics with a realistic flight model. The structure encourages you to adopt the same tactics as a real Apache pilot and the missions are challenging and varied. It's big, too.
Publisher:
Digital Integration (01276 684959)



JETFIGHTER III (91)
Long awaited follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of most of South America. It really is 'just like being there'. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too.
Publisher:
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)

FLIGHT SIM 95 (95)
The longest-running and most successful PC flight sim. An incredibly realistic flight model prompted the US Air Force to use this software as a training tool for their pilots. (But you don't get to shoot anything.)
Publisher:
Microsoft (0181 242 4194)

HIND (90)
Ugly helicopter in decent flight sim shock! For some people this game is maybe a tad too realistic, in as much as the real-life *Hind* itself is very difficult to fly. Purists will love it though.
Publisher:
Digital Integration (01276 684959)

SU27 FLANKER (95)
One for flight sim purists. Admittedly the graphics are crap, but our reviewer raved about it. A great flight model and superb mission builder make it an essential buy for prop-heads everywhere.
Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

A-10 CUBA (90)
Functional graphics (cough) for a game that captures the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Slightly limited with the absence of a fully-fledged campaign but great fun nonetheless.
Publisher:
Activision (01895 456700)

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Culky Says?

Hello Zoners! It's ol' Culkus here isn't it? I've been playing that Trophy Bass 2 game on my PC and I thought you'd like to know just how fish work, so you can catch 'em nice and easy like.

how fish work

The mean hunter

THE WATER LINE

MOST FISH WILL HAVE SMALL CEREAL PLANTATIONS OVER SOME PARTS OF THEIR BODIES, THEY ARE TENDED TO EACH SPRING

BABY FISH COME FROM HERE

THESE BITS SOMETIMES CALLED FINS, ARE USED TO BUILD EXTREMELY COMPLICATED STRUCTURES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA. A SOLID STEEL TOWER (WITH STEPS), WAS BUILT BY COD AND MORRAY EELS TO A HEIGHT OF 300 FEET OF THE COAST OF FRANCE.

THIS IS A CROSS-SECTION OF OUR CREATURES BRAINS. NOTE THE ABUNDANCE OF NOTHING

LIGHT ENTERS HERE AND FEEDS THE FISH. THIS IS WHY THESE TWO FUNNY ROUND BITS FACE UPWARDS TOWARDS THE SKY ETC...

ON ITS LEFT SIDE A FISH HAS A TV MONITOR THAT IT CAN SHOW VIDEO FILMS TO ITS CHILDREN ON. IT ALSO USES THIS FACILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER FISH, I.E. IT WILL SHOW A PHOTO A SHOE IF IT THINKS A HUMAN IS NEAR. THE OTHER FISH WILL UNDERSTAND STRAIGHT AWAY WHAT THIS MEANS AND SCARPER.

THE FISH RECIEVES HUNDREDS OF TINY TELEPATHIC MESSAGES FROM IT'S FRIENDS IN THROUGH HERE, THEY COULD PERHAPS 'SAY' TO IT "TURN LEFT..NOW!"

CROSS-SECTION 'A' SHOWS HIGH TEC INARDS THAT FISH USE FOR NAVIGATION. MOST NOW HAVE MMX

fish facts

FISH NOW SPORT AN ARSON OF TECHNOLOGY JUST UNDER THEIR SKINS. THEY HAVE A T.V. MONITOR THAT THEY USE TO SEND MESSAGES TO OTHER FISH. WHEN SWIMMING TIGHTLY IN SHOALS ALL THE MONITORS ARE ON AND SHOWING ONE OF THREE LETTERS. 'L' TURN LEFT, 'R' TURN RIGHT AND '-' STRAIGHT AHEAD, THE MONITIORS ALSO SHOW SHOES WHEN WE GET NEAR, OR AN OUTBOARD MOTOR DIAGRAM FOR FISHING BOATS. BUT, HOWEVER ALL THESE DEVICES MELT AWAY TO NOTHING WITH A LTTLE BUTTER AND LEMON JUICE ON A MEDIUM TO HOT COOKER RING.

FISH WORK BY 'TRANSMISSION' WHICH MEANS THEY COLLECT LIGHT FROM THE WORLD AND JOIN IT TO OTHER BITS OF LIGHT IN THEIR BODIES. THIS PROCCESS PRODUCES MOVEMENT OR 'GO'. THEY USE THIS 'GO' TO GET ABOUT DOWN THERE AND TO BUILD SOME FANTASTIC STRUCTURES UNDER THE SEA. SOME PERCH IN THE GRAND UNION CANAL ONCE BUILT A MUSEUM AND FINE SCULTURE IN GLASS. FISH USE WHAT IS CALLED ROCKPOOL TECHNOLOGY TO MOVE HUGE BOULDERS IN THE WATER. THEY CONCERNTRATE THEIR PSYCHIC ENERGY AND 'BOOST' IT AT ROCKS. THIS MAKES STONES ETC. DO EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT. THEY CAN ALSO 'BOOST' THEIR ENERGY AT OTHER FISH BUT THIS NORMALLY KILLS THE FISH DOING THE 'BOOSTING' AS IT'S AGAINST GOD'S WILL TO 'BOOST' OTHER FISH. IT'S A FUNNY THING THOUGH, THAT FISH DON'T REALLY LIKE GOD VERY MUCH BECAUSE HE THINKS RATHER HIGHLY OF THEM, EXCEPT OF COURSE THE TOMPOT BLENNY.

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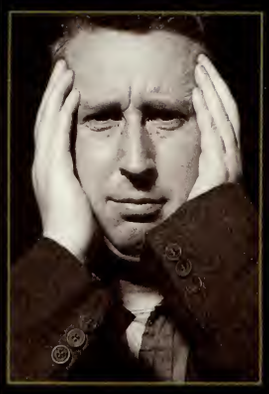


He's afraid of...
Snooker

Mr Cursor

IT'S A LONG STORY, SO I'LL JUMP STRAIGHT in. Here goes. Now, to my way of thinking, the human race (ignoring nationality and gender and what have you) can be split into two distinct groups. Indeed, you'll be a member of one of these groups yourself, so let me pose a question. Okay, you're about to travel on a train from your home to visit a distant chum, and you'll probably end up crashing the night there. So, what do you take with you? And, far more importantly, what do you carry it in?

That's the question, here are the two possible answers:

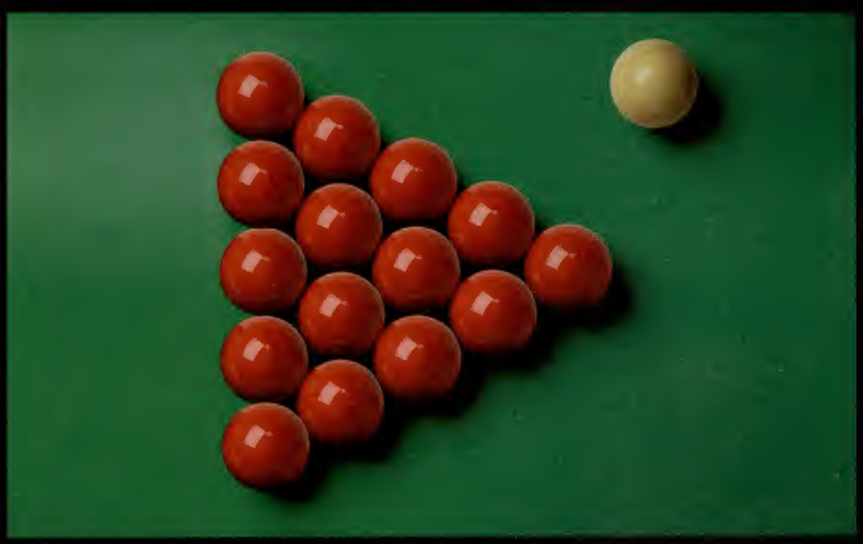
1. If you're in group one, you'll take a lot of kit in numerous travel bags, one of which might have a designer label, such as Gucci.

2. Members of group two, on the other hand, will stuff the bare minimum into a flea-bitten carrier bag.

What's this got to do with snooker?

I'm getting there, I'm getting there. A few weeks ago I was on a train heading to Newhaven, on the south coast, to visit a chum. Next to me on the seat was my scabby carrier bag (taken from the pile of a million other scabby carrier bags in my kitchen).

As usual, I'd attracted the only mad person on the entire train, who was now sitting opposite, explaining, drunkenly, about farming techniques (I think): "Themsh basht'rds nevuh needed yun fackin' tractor shilage shystems, yah knazz wh'am fackin' tellin' yash, man?" On and on for two hours. Luckily, we reached Newhaven station before he stabbed me, so I grabbed my carrier and bade farewell to Monsieur Brain-cell.



Snooker on the south coast, without a computer game anywhere in sight.

A short cab ride later and I was at Steve's. Not long after this, we were in the pub. By seven o'clock the table was crowded: a bunch of Steve's local friends and acquaintances had joined us, and a lot of alcohol was being consumed with gusto. Time passed – as it tends to do in these situations.

Drunken conversation

At about ten o'clock, the inevitable happened: Steve piped up with the information that I worked on a computer mag. Bugger. All of a sudden, everyone and their dogs were experts on computer games, and the computer industry in general. I was, metaphorically speaking, plunged onto the black chair of *Mastermind*... surrounded by 12 Magnus Magnussons.

"I don't know, pass," was my answer to the first question.

"Er, I don't know that either," I replied to the second.

Pass. Pass. Pass.

"I've never heard of it."

Pass. Pass. Pass. Pass. Pass.

And so on, for about half a bloody hour, until the point at which I blurted out this ridiculous piece of gobshite: "Well, people who are good at flight sims are good at distance perception, and working out angles and speeds and stuff. They'd also be good at. . snooker, for instance."

Silence. Uh-oh.

Monumental blunder

"So you're good at snooker, are you?" said the bloke who hadn't spoken much up until now. I could've been honest here, and simply said I didn't know because I'd never played snooker in my entire life. But what I said instead, as you can imagine, went as follows:

"Yeah, not bad, not bad."

Unfortunately, Big Ben (which is his nickname because of the fact that he's big and is called Ben) turned out to be the Newhaven snooker champion, and a member of the local snooker club (which, also unfortunately, was still open).

"Fancy a game?" he asked, knocking back his lager. Everyone else also drank up and, with alarming synchronicity, the landlord called time. Yaaaargh! There was no way out. En route to the snooker club I made the 'but don't forget, I'm a bit pissed' protestations, but Big Ben simply countered with the information that he was too. Bastard.

How do you sidespin? What colour ball do I have to go for next? How many points is the yellow ball worth?

Land of the giants

You know how snooker tables on telly look quite large? Erm, they're actually way, way bigger than that.

Did I want to set the table up? wondered Big Ben. I didn't. (Or, rather, I couldn't.)

Did I want to break? Er, no.

So he broke. My turn, and I completely missed the ball. Sniggers all round. He scored 50. I scored another minus four. He scored 38. I mis-cued. He then cleared the table. Thank god for that – Big Ben had been so keen to show how good *he* was that I never had to ask any of these embarrassing questions: how do you hold the rest? How do you do sidespin? What colour ball do I have to go for next? How many points is the yellow ball worth? And many more besides.

'Want another game?' he said. I didn't.

Back to the bag...

The worst was over, so back to Steve's place. After ten hours of sweaty slumber on an uncomfy curving sofa, my first thoughts were 'toothbrush' and 'clean socks'. I reached for my carrier bag.

It sounds like a naff sit-com plot, I know, but this is 100 per cent true: the bag contained eight used tea bags, an empty milk carton and loads of cigarette butts and fag-ash. I'd brought my kitchen rubbish with me, all the sodding way from London. What a prick.

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PD & SHAREWARE

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WORDPROCESSOR

This month's Agony Uncle is the caring, sharing Charlie Brooker. He's gone through the letters and e-mails with a fine-tooth comb, carefully removing anything of interest and/or value, then reprinted the remaining garbage all over the following pages...

Write in!

Send your letters to:
WordProcessor, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

Send your e-mail to:
CompuServe:
PC ZONE 100142, 2152

CIX:
PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk
Don't forget to check out the PC Zone CIX conference if you're on-line.

NB: *PC Zone* retain the right to completely edit, re-write and change all correspondence in order to make them even more smug, funny and witty.

CHEAP AND NASTY?

I just want say to anyone out there, if you're thinking of buying a game like *Syndicate Wars*, always buy the full version. Never buy one of the £9.99 versions because the graphics, sound etc, are nowhere near as good the full version.

Jamie G, West Sussex

That's because they're all old re-releases, Jamie. Computer games rarely improve with age, but they do get cheaper. A bit like prostitutes.

CHEAP AND FASTY?

I remember watching an ancient edition of the series *Tomorrow's World*, and reading all the raves about a little program called *Theme Park*, followed by your small review in the Buyer's Guide. My delight at now being able to purchase this game for £10.99 saw no bounds – well, it saw one or two, I can't get that excited over a game! (*You zany, off-beat funster, you – CB.*) I loaded it up, watched the intro sequence, then went for it. This is when things got a bit silly. Even on the slowest speed setting the game went from month to month to month in a matter of seconds. What was I doing wrong? I read the manual (how sad), but it couldn't help me slow the game to a speed where I could play it, or at least plan what I was doing, which apparently is a major part of the game.

There are usually loads of letters complaining about games being too slow on certain machines, but what about a warning on those games that were designed for older systems and that are a complete waste of time on the PCs of today?

Yours blurry-eyed,

Ryan MacDonald, Pontefract

Good point. It's not always a problem, but the very least the budget labels could do would be to print some kind of 'Maximum Spec' for games that will probably run too quickly on a contemporary system. In the meantime, perhaps you should have lots of sugary drinks so your brain, eyes and hands can 'catch up' with the game.

BLOKE WITH HEAD SCREWED ON

I thought by now you would have received plenty of angry letters regarding your *Carmageddon* demo.

Well I think it's tops, and if some software publishers are worried about demos of games losing sales, then they should take heed from this demo. This is one game I shall probably buy before reading any reviews.

Steve Griggs, CIX

Glad you enjoyed it Steve – oddly enough, we have yet to receive a single letter of complaint regarding the game – probably because it's such good fun (unless you're a pedestrian).

Check out the review in this issue. And you're right regarding demos and software sales because hands-on experience of a well-made, addictive game is always a real incentive to buy and it's infinitely more convincing than, say, the following...

If anyone complains about the carnage that is *Carmageddon*, they better just watch out next time they're crossing the road...

On sale 10th April

Letter of the Month

A LONG TIME AGO IN AN ANORAK FAR, FAR AWAY...

I am writing to complain about your slating of *Star Wars* (issue 49) and its good/bad points! Let me explain...

Yoda a bad teacher? Who's gonna teach Luke then – Darth Vader? Or perhaps Obi-Wan, the Jedi who failed? Hmmm. An interesting theory!

C-3PO is one of the *best* characters – without him R2-D2 would be an insignificant tin can, the clash of personas is brilliant and you've said it's crap! Nuff said!

Plot inconsistencies. How did Boba Fett know that the Millennium Flacon *(sic)* was with all the trash? Fuel emission? The Star Destroyer didn't pick it up because it wasn't looking, but Fett is the best hunter in the galaxy, has a grudge against Han Solo (and knows him inside out) and knows that Cloud City is near and Solo's old friend Lando lives there! So, he follows the emission trail of the Millennium Falcon, figures out where it's heading, hits hyperspace (the MF's hyperdrive isn't working) and he gets to Cloud City first, where he informs Vader who also arrives before our heroes. Okay?

How did Jabba (not "Jaba"!) know that Boussh was really Leia? Who says he did? Perhaps it was Fett again, who knew that the real Boussh was actually dead (that's a fact, read *Shadows Of The Empire*) so this one could only be someone looking for Solo? Everyone there must have known that there would be a rescue attempt for Solo! And besides, Leia walks into those chimes and probably wakes up half the palace!

Why didn't the Death Star go around the planet Yavin and then blow up its fourth moon? Well, have you any idea how long it takes to move the Death Star? It's the size of Yavin IV at least! Do you really suppose they're going to waste fuel going around a planet when it takes just as long to sit there and wait for it to move out of the way? Etc, etc.

It really gets on my nerves when magazines do these little articles on stuff like *Star Wars* – articles that aren't even significant to a games review – and don't take the time to think whether or not what they say is a worthwhile criticism.

I failed to see what was funny about any of this! I doubt you'll even reply to this because you don't have an answer! I suggest you bask in your own stupidity and ignorance and then think hard next time before you talk out of somewhere that was designed only for the excretion of nitrogenous waste products!

'James', CIX

Thanks for putting us straight on all of that, James. We weren't aware that the Star Wars *trilogy is actually a documentary series. Next time, instead of writing in to correct us, why not just get in touch with the National Association of Uptight Cranks (they're in the Yellow Pages, under 'Oddball Services')? It's an independent body dedicated to ensuring that all UK media coverage of fictional, made-up, not-real-at-all entities is fair, accurate, and then it goes into arse-achingly trivial detail about absolutely bloody everything. Okay?*

If your letter is lucky enough to be selected as 'Letter of the Month', we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

MARKETING PEOPLE ARE SCUMBALLS

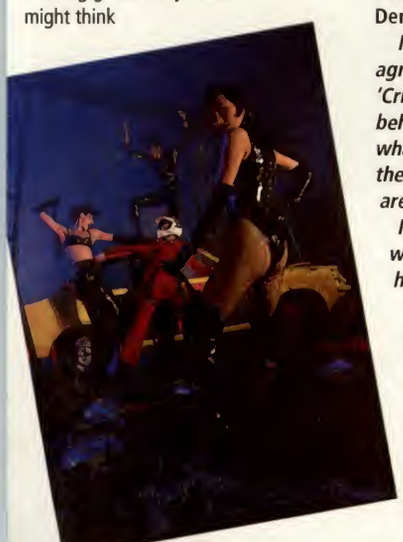
I have been a computer user for over 15 years, but I've only just gained access to one that will allow me to play games. (*What the hell have you been using all this time, an abacus? – CB.*)

I browsed through all the games magazines on the shelves before purchasing the February issue of *PC Zone*. The advertising and description of the computer games and products have shocked and appalled me for their sexist depiction of women.

The advert for *Destruction Derby 2* in particular illustrates the point: it has scantily-clad women in sado-masochistic costumes advertising a racing game. Why? Some might think I'm over-reacting, but I feel those pictures are degrading to women. They will be seen by a young audience who are impressionable. They will also be off-putting to many current and potential gamers such as myself.

Aren't the games good enough to sell on their own merits, without pictures of scantily-clad women?

Crispin Evans



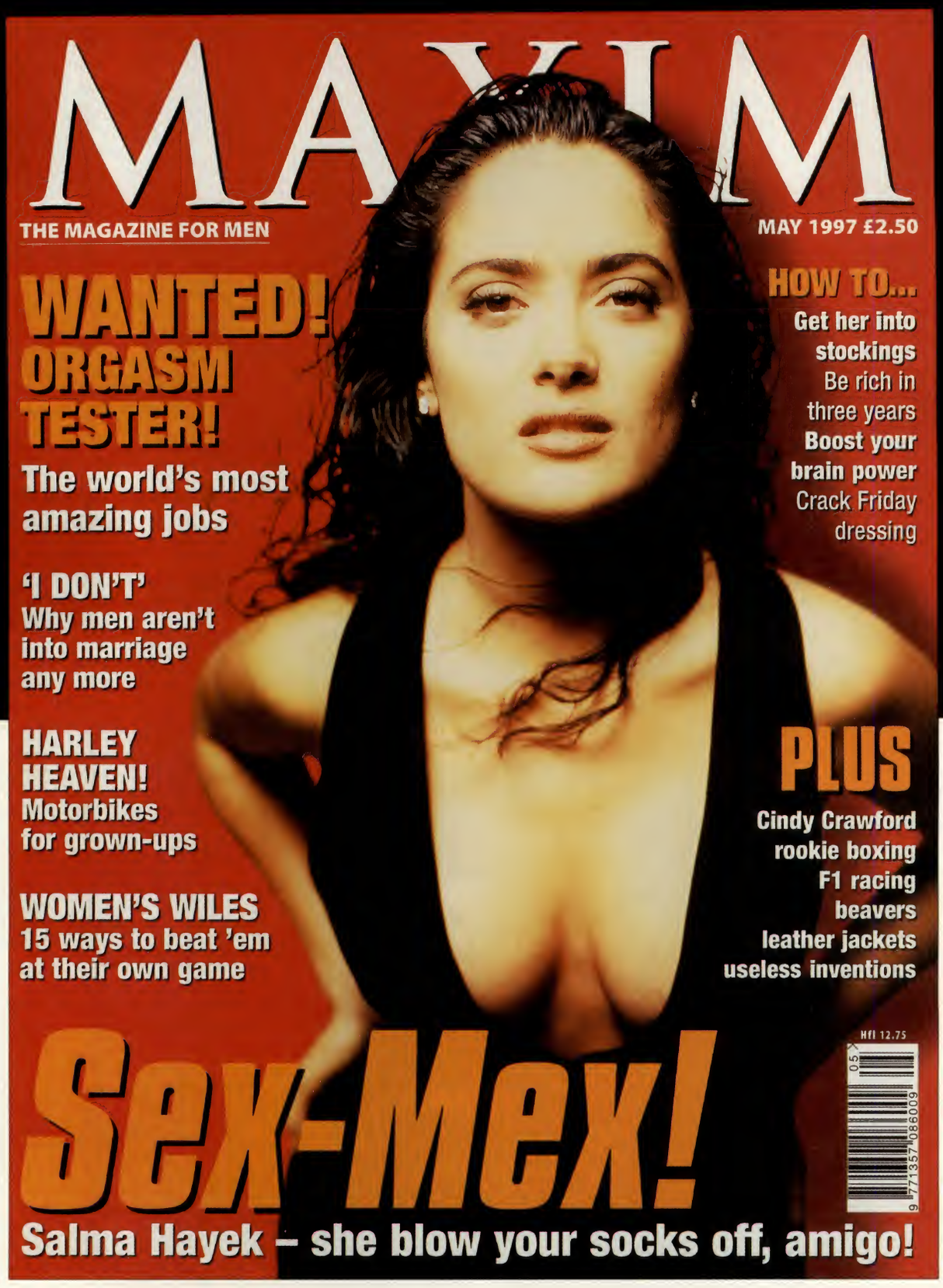
As the late, great Bill Hicks was fond of pointing out, the official definition of pornography is "any material which has no redeeming social value, and causes sexual thought" – an interpretation that accurately describes almost every ad that's ever been made, Destruction Derby *spreads and all.*

I've never found myself in agreement with anyone named 'Crispin' before, but I'm sort of behind you on this one – although what offends me *is the fact that the advertisements in question are unforgivably* dull.

If the software marketing boys want to use sexual imagery to help shift their distinctly un-sexy

If marketing men think biased, sexist images like this will sell their products, they're wrong! They're just too tame.

NEW ISSUE



On sale now

products, they should really use hardcore, close-up pictures of massive great gang-bangs – with the logo of the game in question tattooed across the buttocks of each participant – and just have done with it.

But they won't, of course, because they're just a bunch of gutless, soulless, hollow-eyed blockheads who assume that every gamesplayer in the country is a drooling, Pavlovian sexual inadequate, unwilling to purchase a particular title unless the printed ads do a little ham-fisted prick-teasing first. Every exposed buttock, every flashed tit, every splayed thigh, each inch of flesh that's ever been exposed, stands in silent testimony to the kind of sad and inept, inspiration-free, lowest-common-denominator cynicism that all these hateful parasites manage to build their wasted 'careers' upon.

If I could have my way, I'd like to strand the lot of them together on a remote desert island. Ideally, it would be completely devoid of all foliage or animal life, so they would eventually all be forced to hunt, kill, and then eat each other in order to survive.

And, just to add insult, I'd video the entire proceedings, dub a load of 'comedy' sound effects and music over the top, then tour the country, showing it in every town hall, community centre and youth club I could find, until everybody in the entire nation had finally got the message.

All I need is a killer title. Does anyone have any suggestions?

Some people are just so shallow and can't wait to tell you about it. Gambrose explains how to cheat and gloat with *Red Alert*.

THE FILTH AND THE FURY...

It's the first time I've bought *PC Zone*. The CD won't run in DOS properly, except to load the game *F1* – and then, as I read the instructions, I was disgusted to read the words: "You hateful twat, you." I find this language offensive when directed at myself.

I'm not a prude, but this is more fitting language for the mags on the top shelf at the newsagents. Most of us can have a jolly good swear, but do we need it in print in a PC mag?

Mr M J Pointon, CIX

You sound like a nice boy, Mr Pointon. How d'ya fancy going out dancing at the weekend? We could both strip down to the waist and then spray our bare chests with water and stuff. I'll wear the tightest jeans I've got, especially for you. Kissy kissy.

THE LONE VOICE OF REASON

I've been reading *PC Zone* for the past couple of issues, and so far I've been very impressed. It's so refreshing to find a magazine that doesn't beat around the bush.

As a married man with two kids I have more than enough fluffy bunny type reading around the house, so it's nice to have something that's directed at my age group.

Paul Jones, CIX

Thanks, Paul. Thanks a lot, we really appreciate that. You hateful twat, you.

HE IS RIGHT AND WE ARE WRONG

I was reading the *Red Alert* review in issue 47 and noticed your criticism of the AI. It said a solution to the bad AI was to have a step-by-step marker for troops, eg waypoints. But you didn't say that this is included in the game. If you press the Q key you can set up to nine waypoints. It doesn't mention it in the manual, but you can do it. So now I would like to say HA HA I am right and you are wrong.

Gambrose, Internet

Well, there you go, Gambrose. Lap up your little moment of glory.

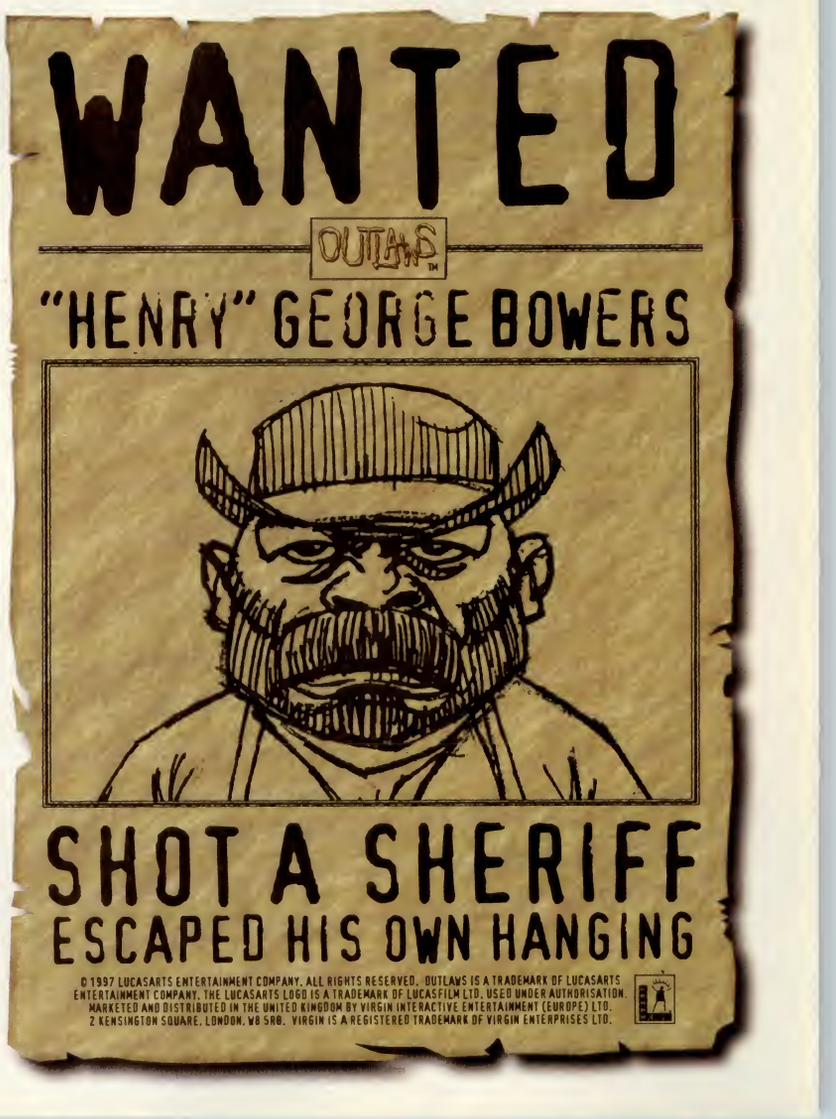
'ZANY' HUMOUR CORNER

To whatever motherf**king, giblet-grinding, shit-talking, spit-licking, corrigated *(sic)* purple-eared little bastard who *(sic)* it may concern, I am writing to complain sincerely about the lack of poltrey *(sic)* content in *PC Zone*.

I know that chicken and turkey lovers, like me, may be in the minority of your readers, and that the name of the magazine suggests that it is PC themed, but please give poltrey *(sic)* a mention. I have been reading *PC Zone* for nearly two years now in the hope of seeing an article related to my life. I come out of my completely self-sufficient chicken farm on top of the local post office once a month to buy your magazine with what little money I can pick out of the gutter. I am living in hope of seeing turkey-related matters in your magazine – perhaps 'unorthodox stuffing method of the month'.

John Hayes,
1 Chicken Road,
Turkey Ham

Judging by the handwriting, illustrations and 'humour' in his letter, John is still at school. Go and read a book, John. Something high-brow. Concentrate during maths lessons. Apply yourself to all those GCSE projects that are looming. Better yourself while there's still time. For your own sake, please.



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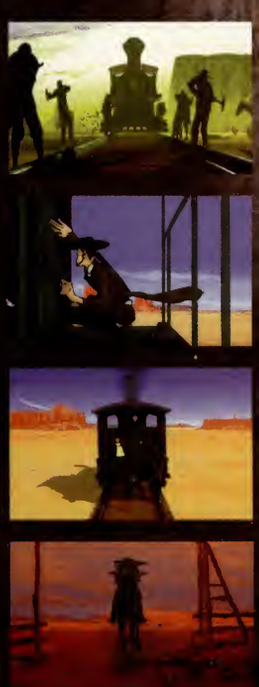

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